Commentary

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BLACK PROGRESS & LIBERAL RHETORIC

Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon

On Challenging an Orthodoxy
R. J. Herrnstein

The Achievement of Gershom Scholem
Robert Alter

The "Times" Op-Ed Page
Carl Gershman

Our (English) Crowd
Chaim Raphael

A Pride of Candidates
Dorothy Rabinowitz

The New Inquisitors
Norman Podhoretz

Books in Review:
Martin Mayer/David Thorburn/David Stern/Joseph W. Bishop, Jr./Robert W. Greene

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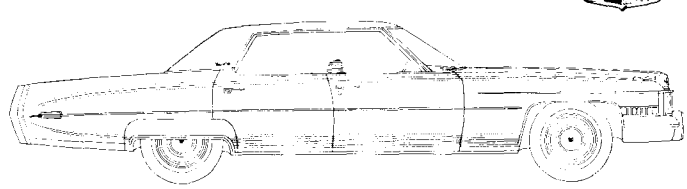

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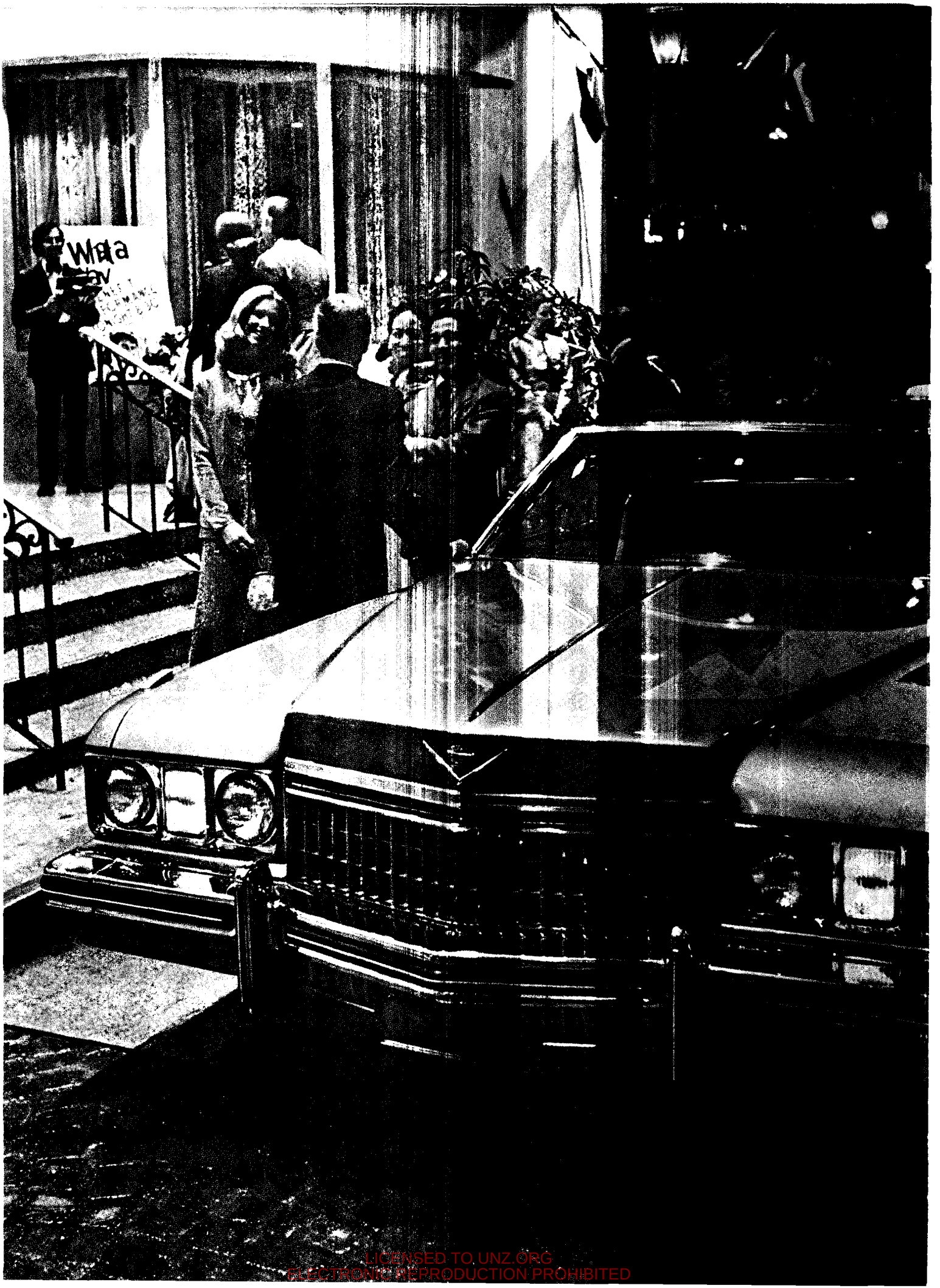

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Commentary

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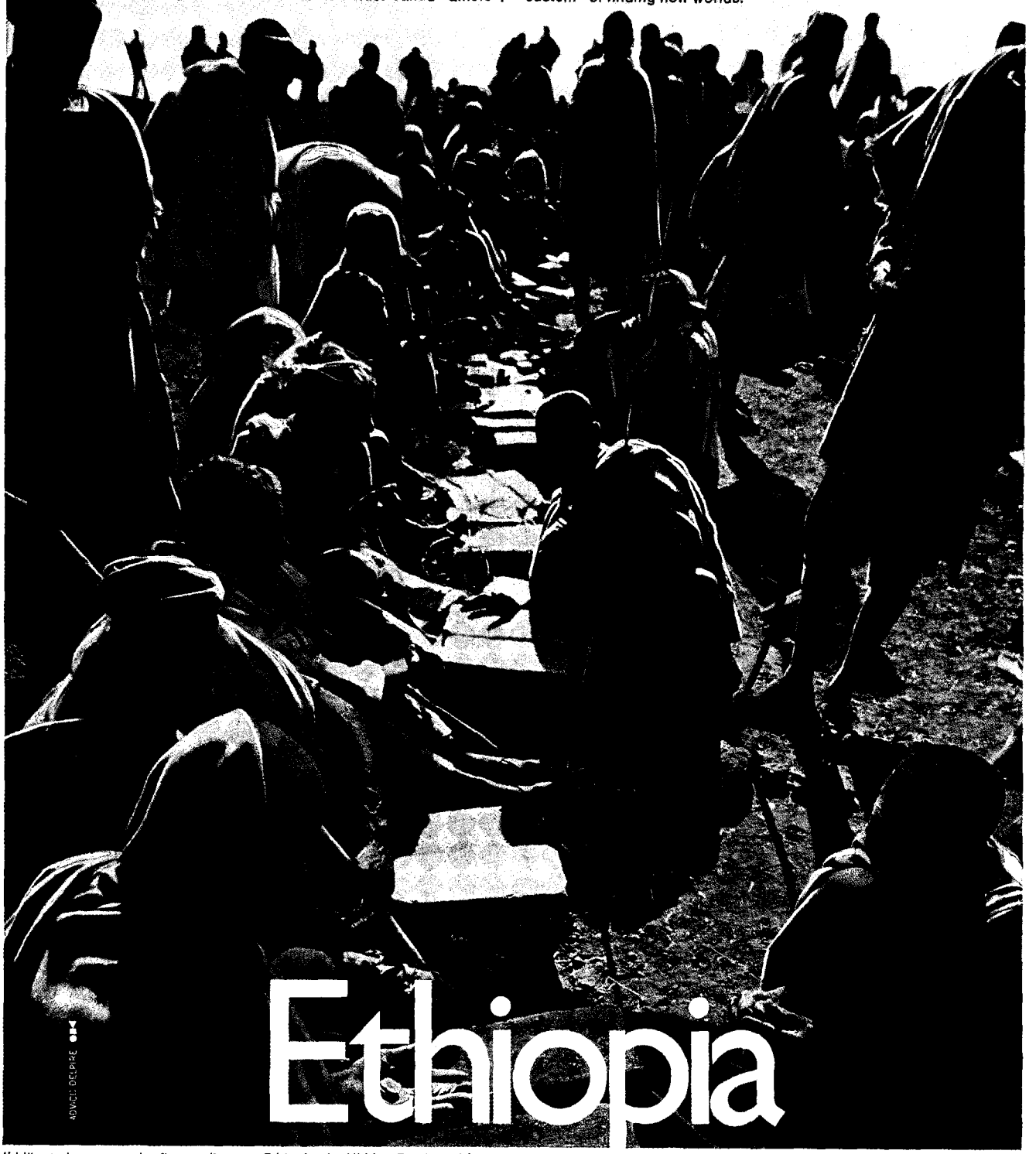

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The New Inquisitors

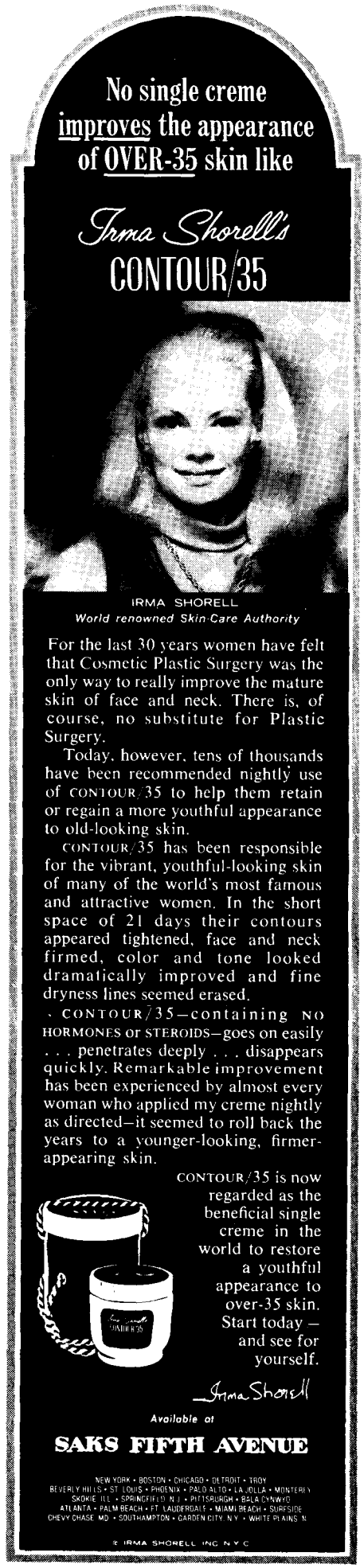
Norman Podhoretz

To me, the worst part of the story R. J. Herrnstein (p. 52) tells of the harassment he has endured at Harvard and on other college campuses since publishing an article in the *Atlantic* on the heritability of IQ scores is what it reveals about the "subtle connection" between "the radicals and the liberal-intellectual community." The radicals spread lies about Herrnstein and made it difficult for him to speak; the liberals deplored the tactics of the radicals and defended Herrnstein's rights while dissociating themselves from his "views." The impression was thereby left that Herrnstein's actual views corresponded to the distortions and vilifications publicized by the radicals.

Thus the radicals called Herrnstein a racist, although his article said nothing about race and although he does not believe that there is a correlation between the intelligence of blacks and their social position as a group. On the contrary, the data cited by Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon (p. 35) showing the extraordinary progress blacks have been making since being afforded a greater measure of equality of opportunity would, in Herrnstein's scheme, constitute evidence that the disproportionate bunching of blacks "at the lower end of the social scale" has been caused by social rather than genetic factors. For what Herrnstein's *Atlantic* article did say was that policies which minimize the influence of social factors in the distribution of social rewards must have the effect of maximizing the importance of genetic factors in all individuals of whatever race or ethnic group. If, therefore, blacks were being held back by their genetic inheritance, greater equality of opportunity would more likely have resulted in a worsening than in an improvement in their social situation.

Herrnstein's actual views, then, carry no hint of racism. They do, however, carry a great threat to the kind of liberalism which bases itself on the idea that there are no limits to the results which can be achieved by manipulating the social environment. Liberals who believe this had every right to be worried about Herrnstein's article and they had a duty to debate it in stringent intellectual terms. Instead they permitted the issue to be defined as racism, which made it possible for them to defend Herrnstein's intellectual freedom while simultaneously making it unnecessary for them to confront the hard intellectual challenge he had posed to some of their fundamental ideas.

Those of us outside the academic community who were horrified by the radical assault on the universities in the 1960's knew that this assault would not have been so successful had the liberal majority resisted it. In trying to understand why the liberal majority failed to resist what on the surface certainly looked like an attack on liberalism, we came to suspect that the explanation, to speak bluntly, must have had something to do with bad conscience or weakness. Probably this was true in many instances. But the Herrnstein case throws a different light on the situation. It leads one to wonder whether the liberal majority was not allowing the radicals to misstate issue after issue so as to focus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the discussion on matters which were relatively safe from the liberal point of view while any serious or disinterested or truly radical questioning of the principal liberal dogmas was being interdicted by the vilification and terrorization of all who dared to bring such questions up.

I do not suggest that this purpose was being pursued by deliberate design, but I do suggest that it was this purpose which ended up being served. The New Left has now virtually disappeared as an organized force, with the consequence that there is no violence on the campus nowadays, and there is less booing and heckling. Yet the freedom to question liberal dogmas has not returned. About a year ago, another Harvard professor, James Q. Wilson, writing in these pages,* said of the university at which both he and Mr. Herrnstein teach that "the list of subjects that cannot be publicly discussed there in a free and open forum has grown steadily, and now includes the war in Vietnam, public policy toward the urban ghettos, the relationship between intelligence and heredity, and the role of American corporations in certain overseas regimes." That is, people (including dissident liberals) who hold unorthodox views on these subjects are either prevented from speaking at all or can only speak "under mental and social duress."

In the few short months since Mr. Wilson wrote his piece, several additional subjects—Richard Nixon, ecology, the condition of women, and the moral or medical character of homosexuality—have been demanding inclusion on the index of settled issues and will no doubt soon be inscribed, if most of them have not been already. Moreover, from personal experience I myself can testify that the hostility to free discussion on many campuses today extends beyond particular subjects to almost any idea which is critical of the liberal orthodoxy of the moment on any subject whatsoever. (Whether so authoritarian and so intolerant an ethos is entitled to be called liberal is another matter, but as Mr. Herrnstein does with the term radical—and out of that special weariness which contending for possession of an honorific label invariably inspires—I defer here to common usage.)

No one likes to be challenged. No one likes to be forced into rethinking lifelong assumptions and revising lifelong beliefs. No one likes to admit that the "enemy" may have been right on certain things after all. Everyone likes to feel that his own ideas are, or ought to be, immune from criticism. In this intellectuals are no different from anyone else. Where intellectuals are supposed to differ—supposed both in the sense that it is imagined of them and that it is their professional duty—is in the will and the ability to overcome their normal human resistance to criticism or to a change of mind in the face of persuasive evidence or argument. Once upon a time, indeed, the aim of a liberal education was to help people develop this will and this ability. When, for example, I was an undergraduate at Columbia in the late 1940's (and so far as I know for a long while after) it was assumed by students and teachers alike that we were there to call the ideas we had all grown up with—whatever they might be, liberal or conservative, radical or reactionary, religious or secularist—into question and to expose their foundation in prejudice and parochialism, roughly on the theory that the unexamined life was not worth living. Today the only ideas it seems to be the aim of a college education to disturb are those that conflict with the pieties which happen to prevail at the time within the "liberal" culture.

The upshot is an atmosphere which is no longer conducive to fearless inquiry or even to playful speculation and which, far from encouraging, positively obstructs the development of independence of mind and of the critical spirit. Thus do our colleges and universities continue their degenerative mutation from sanctuaries for free discussion into inquisitorial agents of a dogmatic secular faith. ■

* "Liberalism versus Liberal Education," June 1972.

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Letters from Readers

The Election and the Democrats

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I don't mean to cavil, since the article by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab on the 1972 elections ["The Election & the National Mood," January] seems to me to be basically sound in its three major points: 1) that McGovern's errors rather than Nixon's popularity explain the landslide election; 2) that the election did not represent a referendum on specific issues or an ideological or racial backlash; 3) that the Democratic party still retains the underlying trust of most Democrats who voted for Nixon.

But the article also contains three other assumptions that should be corrected: 1) that McGovern misread the mood of the electorate as "alienated" and wrongly assumed that he could win the Wallace vote on the same terms he could attract upper-middle-class professionals; 2) that the Democratic convention ended the election by exposing the extremism and evangelical moralism of the McGovernites; and 3) that an "ideological" candidate like McGovern or Goldwater cannot win a national election. These three points are not substantiated with the same careful use of evidence that Messrs. Lipset and Raab use for their major conclusions.

1) "Alienation" and the Wallace vote. Messrs. Lipset and Raab give Nixon a 2 to 1 edge over McGovern with 1968 Wallace voters. I take it they are rounding off the CBS figures published in the *National Journal* which assert that nation-wide Nixon won 60 per cent of the Wallace vote, McGovern 33 per cent, with 7 per cent not responding or voting for Schmitz, the American Independent party candidate. Nixon thus did only slightly better among Wallace voters than among voters generally, among whom he won 61 per cent to McGovern's 38 per cent. However, if we look behind the Wallace figures a remarkable fact emerges. In the South, where McGovern did not campaign, Nixon's ratio was reported as 3-1, or 70 per cent Nixon, 23 per cent McGovern, 7 per cent residual. This means that outside the South, where Wallace got half his 1968 support, Nixon's margin among Wallace voters was only 7-6, or 50 per cent Nixon, 43 per cent McGovern, 7 per cent residual. Given the utter collapse of the McGovern campaign, its mishandling of the war issue, and its many remarks inimical to Wallace voters, McGovern's showing of 43 per cent outside the South is remarkable. It is matched by the fact that before the Eagleton affair, McGovern was running nearly even with Nixon in Texas, an impossibility without substantial East Texas Wallaceite support. Also, the plurality of Wallace voters in the Texas primary voted for Sissy Farenthold, the New-Politics candidate *par excellence*. This suggests to me that the McGovern strategists were correct in their demagogic assumption that shrill attacks on Nixon by a "clean," neo-populist candidate were good tactics, however irresponsible they may have been on other grounds. McGovern's problem with Wallaceites was not his ideological fervor, but the fact that after the Eagleton affair he was not "clean," not a real contrast to Nixon. Even so, in those states where he campaigned he appears to have done better among Wallace voters than among voters generally. The Wallace vote is thus the thinnest of the supports which Messrs. Lipset and Raab supply for their conclusion that "George McGovern and his strategists totally misjudged the character of the American electorate."

The overall conclusion is also open to dispute. Playing on the alienation of disgruntled younger professionals and Wallaceites was in fact a good Democratic strategy for 1972, just as the good counter-strategy was to associate this with disorder, incompetence, and cynicism. The fact that the counter-strategy won for Nixon does not alter the fact that the general McGovern strategy targeted groups that would have been targeted by a Kennedy, Muskie, or Humphrey. Its problem was one of execution, not strategic concept.

2) The effect of the convention. It of course suits defeated factions to argue that candidates who do not make adequate compromises with them in conventions cannot win the subsequent election. This

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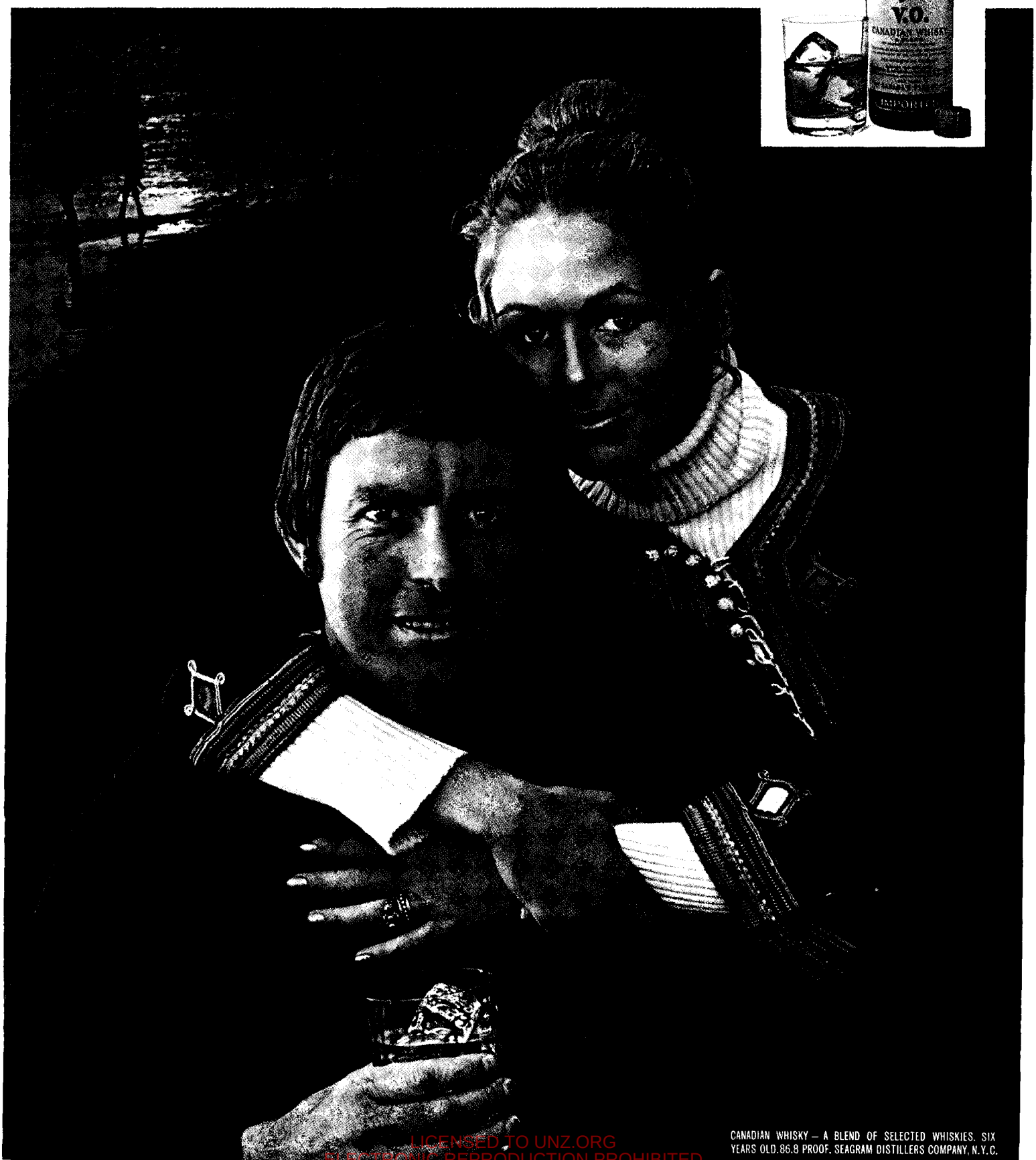

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was the argument of moderate Republicans post-1964 and now of moderate Democrats post-1972. Though I personally prefer a moderate style of politics, the argument is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain with evidence of electoral behavior. Messrs. Lipset and Raab argue correctly that the fact that McGovern's support did not rise after the 1972 convention was a danger signal. But it was not, as Norman Podhoretz [in "What the Voters Sensed," January] and the authors seem to think, the end of the campaign. Mr. Podhoretz writes: "McGovern trailed by the same twenty points in November as he had trailed by in July." True, but there was in fact considerable movement behind these figures. Here are some representative figures based on follow-up studies with the same voters between July and September and made available to reporters by the McGovern organization:

	Nixon	*McGovern*	*Undecided*
JULY	52	37	11
SEPTEMBER	56	34	10

On the face of it these look very stable, supporting the conclusion that "nothing changed" after the Democratic convention. But like the figures on the Wallace vote, they are worth some analysis. Of the 56 per cent of the electorate who were for Nixon in September, only 43 per cent had been with him in July. Of the 34 per cent for McGovern in September, only 23 per cent had been with him in July. Thus between July and September *nearly a third of the electorate* switched from one category to another. I believe that the even more detailed Nixon polling figures would, if made public, confirm this unprecedented fluidity.

The general principles of movement appear to have been as follows. Those who switched from McGovern to Nixon were about evenly split between younger college-educated voters and younger Wallace-leaning voters. Not the convention but McGovern's general level of candor and competence seems to have been salient with both of these groups. Those who switched from undecided to Nixon were mostly upper-income independents. Those who switched from Nixon and undecided to McGovern were mostly "behavioral Democrats" coming home to roost: low- and middle-income blacks and Catholics. Those who moved from Nixon to undecided were almost exclusively upper-income Republicans disturbed about Watergate and corruption. Between September and November other movements occurred, but it appears that most of the important shifts had occurred by early September.

These movements in the electorate along with the unprecedented levels of ticket-splitting suggest a more volatile situation in 1972 than one would expect from a reading of Messrs. Lipset and Raab. . . . I believe that it would have been more accurate had Messrs. Lipset, Raab, and Podhoretz said that the convention created suspicions of McGovern but that it took subsequent events to confirm them. McGovern's main strength against Nixon was (exactly as his supporters argued) that he was unknown even after the convention to most of the electorate. This was turned into a weakness when the Eagleton affair and McGovern's modification of his stands on key issues made him known only too well in an unfavorable light. But it was in the campaign, not in the California primary or in the nominating convention, that McGovern lost the election. It is important to stress these fine distinctions to understand how fluid our political system has become.

3) The end of ideology. It is traditional to assume that only a "pragmatic" candidate who makes broad-based compromises can win a national election. Underlying this assumption is another one, that the politics of elite competition for the nomination reflect realities of mass electoral behavior, since each competing faction presumably can deliver votes in the general election. Yet the entire postwar American experience—and particularly in the period 1964-72—has served to weaken ties that bind nominating factions to national electoral behavior. In one sense this is Messrs. Lipset and Raab's point. They argue that factional leaders, in mobilizing the support necessary for a nomination, may alienate voters they need in a national election. But the volatility of the electorate in the 1972 elections may justify a more unsettling conclusion: regardless of one's route to victory in the nomination, regardless of the compromises one makes (or

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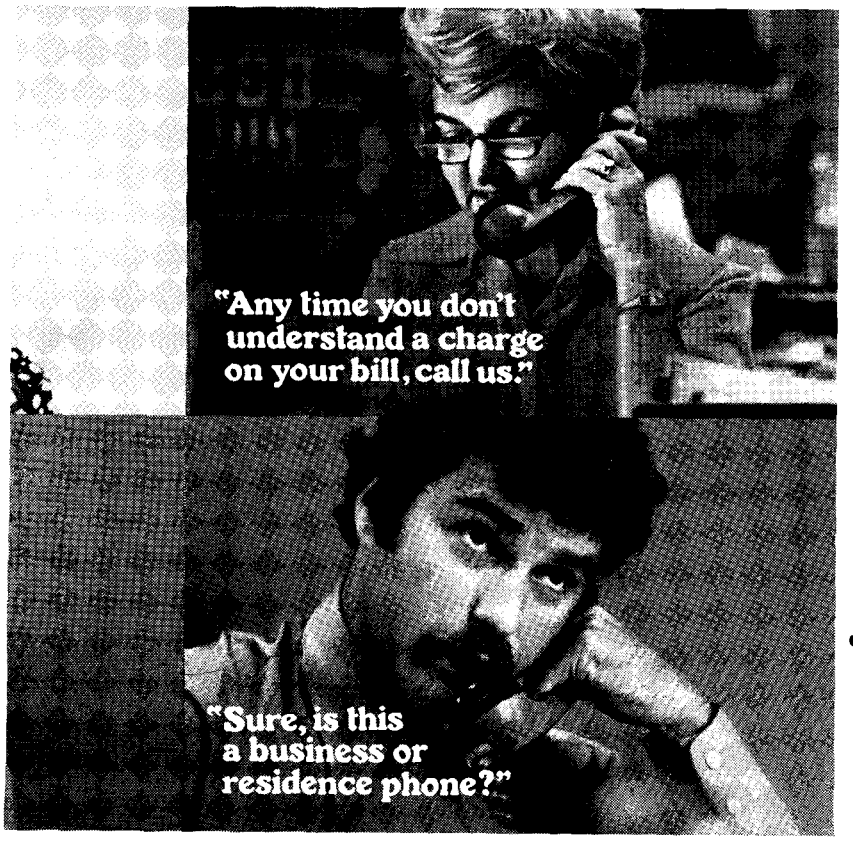

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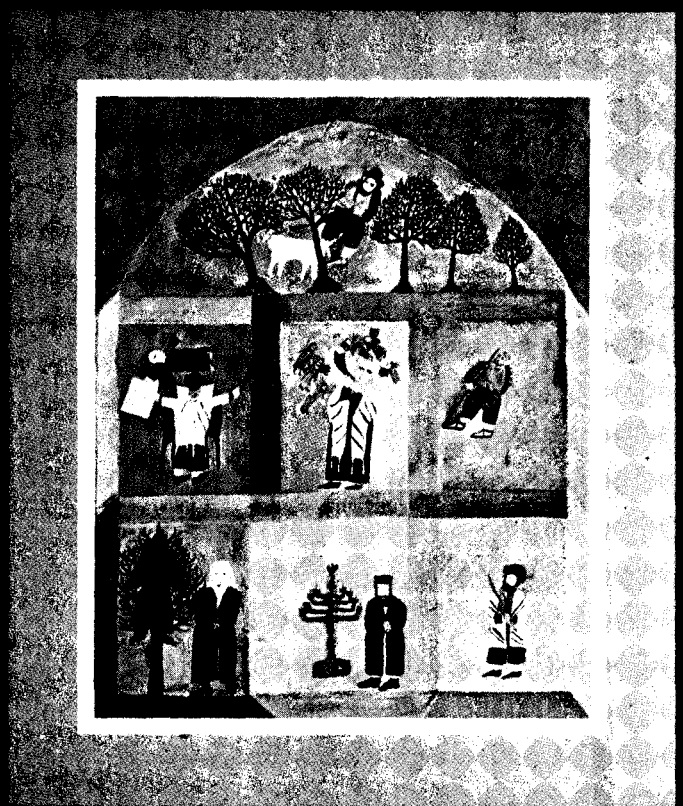

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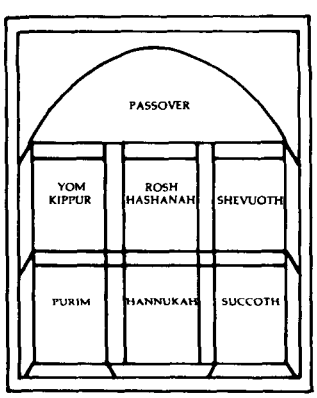

THE HOLIDAYS is typical of Harry Lieberman's joyous treatment of religious themes as he charmingly crowds a lifetime into a single picture, vibrant with color. Naive yet sophisticated, the overall effect can be likened to a Hasidic combination of biblical literalness and inspired symbolism. A faint nostalgia for the teachings of childhood and its lost innocence permeates the entire group despite its paradoxical appearance of stained glass panels in a wood frame.

Harry Lieberman's own life is as fascinating as his paintings, which win high critical praise wherever they are shown. Although he started his painting career late (at the age of 78) and as a primitive, there is nothing amateurish about his work. In fact, the richness of the color and detail in his interpretations of Biblical themes imbue them with great vitality and warmth.

Born in a typical *shtetl*, Gnieveshev, pop. 500, near Warsaw, nephew of the village Rabbi, Harry Lieberman followed the Hasidic Sect of Mystic Ecstasy founded by the Baal-Shem-Tov. He came to this country in 1906 and worked at first as a clothing cutter on the lower East Side of New York. The confectionary business beckoned next, and the one he and his wife started grew and prospered until he retired to Great Neck, New York, in 1950. There his primary interest was chess but, when his chess partner fell ill—Harry Lieberman turned to painting.

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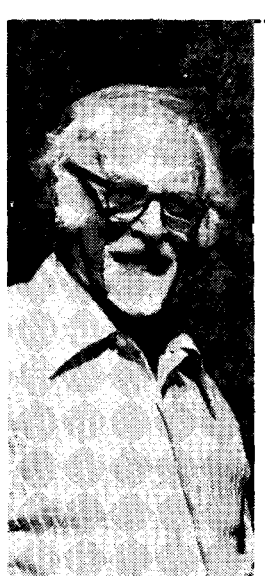

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fails to make) to consolidate factional support, it is possible to win an election in the campaign itself. This means that we are moving into a period of party nonalignment when campaign professionals will have more to say about election dynamics than social scientists or established party leaders. Increasingly, electoral movements do not reflect social trends but (as the Lipset-Raab title aptly suggests) ephemeral questions of "national mood"; this does not rule out ideology. For any Presidential candidate the electorate must now be viewed as a problem in short-term strategy first, long-term coalition-building second. This is indeed a "new politics," but the kind that neither "reformers" nor "bosses" will find congenial.

This is not the place to draw out the full implications of the new fluid, strategic politics. But one point is germane to the call for a return to balance and moderation with which Messrs. Lipset and Raab end their piece. The factors that in the past have made it prudent to be "pragmatic," "moderate," and "balanced" are fast disappearing from national Presidential politics. For a while we can rely on the natural good sense of the American people and informal networks of journalists and financial angels to preserve a stable, moderate political process. But the whole wisdom of our Constitution is that good sense is not enough. It must be buttressed by formal rules that guarantee a balanced system of government. In Presidential politics, the natural pursuit of victory under the current rules of party competition, factional rivalry, and media campaigning now tends toward immoderation and destabilization.

Thus, the same conditions that made it prudent for the McGovernites to lead a vendetta against the Old Politics, now make it prudent for their opponents to lead a counter-vendetta, and in much the same terms.

JOSIAH LEE AUSPITZ
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz, and Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab spend considerable time analyzing the obvious—that is, the mystical (and by implication correct) insight of the American electorate. We well know by now that a majority of voters considered George McGovern too extreme. We know that Richard Nixon swept many groups which were formerly Democratic. We know that the coattail effect was missing, indicating a clear distaste for what Senator McGovern stood for.

But what, in fact, did Senator McGovern stand for? Instead of constantly pressing a finger on the American pulse, why is there no attempt to determine voter acuity? By whose postulate is the "national mood" necessarily right and Mr. McGovern wrong?

Mr. Podhoretz tells us that a "wave of domestic political disgust" was directed against those "who persisted in branding American participation in the Vietnam war a crime and in comparing . . . Nixon to Hitler." Yet nowhere does he deign to assess the illegality of the war or the appropriateness of the Nixon-Hitler analogy in that context. . . .

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Mr. Lipset and Mr. Raab tell us that the only significant ideological differences between McGovern voters and Nixon voters were on issues such as marijuana and amnesty. But they don't stop to consider whether marijuana and amnesty are the two most pressing issues facing this country. . . . They ascribe the McGovern defeat to his excessive "moralism" (as if moralism were a despicable attribute) and to his failure to have "a much greater capacity for fudging issues" (as if a capacity for fudging issues were a virtue). Finally, with a surge of perspicacity, Messrs. Lipset and Raab observe: "George McGovern and his strategists totally misjudged the character of the American electorate."

I agree. It's Richard Nixon's electorate—and Richard Nixon's character. But somehow I was aware of that before I read the articles. . . .

IRVIN MUCHNICK

Creve Coeur, Missouri

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Seymour Martin Lipset, Earl Raab, and Norman Podhoretz find that George McGovern failed because he did not recognize the mood of America—apathy, bigotry, self-satisfaction, unconcern, military flag-waving. I believe George McGovern understood the mood and tried to change it by advocating programs to improve the quality of life.

Judaism and Torah—to many of us—when converted into human relations mean a desire to help our fellow man, including those in the ghetto. New humanistic priorities and economic redistribution are required. The 1970's are such a time. Our cities are on the verge of insolvency; the death of the cities will result in the death of the spirit of the people. I would prefer to hear Messrs. Lipset, Raab, and Podhoretz discuss how to improve life in America. America needs leadership, not consensus. . . .

BURT ZIEN

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's piece is the most perceptive analysis I have seen of the mentality of George McGovern and his advisers. I think Mr. Podhoretz's most telling phrase is that it was "to no one's surprise but their own" that the McGovern people lost by one of the biggest margins in U.S. history.

This lack of touch with the mood and values of the electorate is the hallmark of the ideologue. Barry Goldwater also suffered from it (though in his case it was not compounded by the contempt for Middle Americans—i.e., most voters—that Mr. Podhoretz documents so well in McGovern). In fact, the same basic failing was built in to both the Goldwater and McGovern campaigns: both men were so blinded by the rays of their own sincerity and righteousness that they could not sense the distrust in which the country held them. They saw it only when it appeared on TV election night.

It is one of the blessings of our system that the electoral process almost automatically screens out candidates who are insensitive to the public mood. For an essential quality in a leader is the ability to sense the thoughts of those he would lead (whether he agrees with those thoughts or wants to change them), and a man who lacks this ability would make as poor a President as McGovern and Goldwater made candidates.

JAMES N. MILLER

Croton-on-Hudson, New York

SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET and EARL RAAB write:

Apparently virtue is its own punishment, and the few happy hairshirts love it. In a recent letter to supporters, George McGovern applied to himself and to politics the line of Camus: "the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart." In this vein has George McGovern interpreted the election as a failure of the benighted populace to measure up to this moral rectitude. Irvin Muchnick and Burt Zien echo this sentiment; perhaps little was learned after all.

Moralism in politics *is* a "despicable attribute," in Mr. Muchnick's phrase, because the term does not denote morality but the assumption that all one's opponents are immoral. The only remedy, then, is on the order of large doses of castor oil, forcibly administered. When we indicated that McGovern was seen as "extremist," it was not because of his attitudes toward issues such as welfare and taxes, but because of his attitudes toward democratic procedure, as suggested by his moralistic style.

But the heart of the matter is not that more Americans turned out to be "wrong" than "right." This is not the way in which McGovern most significantly "misjudged the character of the American electorate." Mr. Zien says we found that "George McGovern failed because he did not recognize the mood of America—apathy, bigotry, self-satisfaction, unconcern, military flag-waving."

But the point was that McGovern failed partly because he mistakenly assumed that those qualities and attitudes formed the mood of those Americans opposed to him. Apparently McGovern and many of his followers still believe that they lost because most Americans were degenerate, immoral, and ignorant in the ways listed by Mr. Zien. The evidence we brought to bear suggested otherwise. Significant portions of the American people were not apathetic as much as they were ambivalent. They were not self-satisfied or unconcerned, but uneasy about the course of the country, discontented with Nixon's performance, and tortured by the Democratic party's failure to provide them with an acceptable alternative. There was no evidence, as we indicated, that bigotry played a significant role in the election—and much evidence that "military flag-waving" was counter to the majority mood of the country.

It is therefore remarkable that so many still see the election as merely a demonstration that the majority of Americans are racist, jingoistic slobs who have turned their backs on humanistic concerns. Our fear, reading some of the events of the past few months, is that Richard Nixon may have made the same mistaken assessment.

Josiah Lee Auspitz agrees with our major conclusions, but raises some technical points. First, our judgments concerning the distribution of the Wallace support did *not* come from the CBS Election Day survey, although we received a computer print-out from CBS, and used some of it in the article. The CBS researchers explicitly asked that their findings, concerning the way 1968 Wallace voters were distributed in 1972, not be used, because it seemed clear that their sample of self-reported Wallace voters was peculiar; it did not correspond to any pattern found in 1968.

Assorted polls did relate attitudes to pre-nomination Democratic pref-

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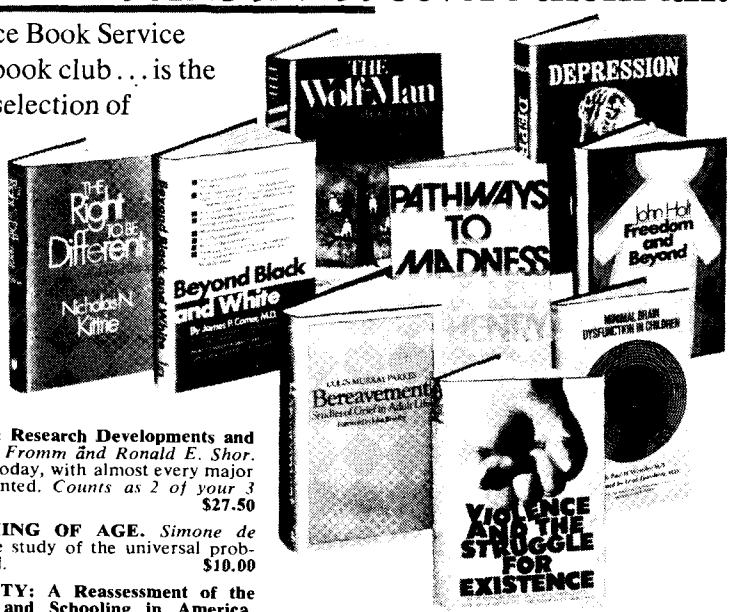

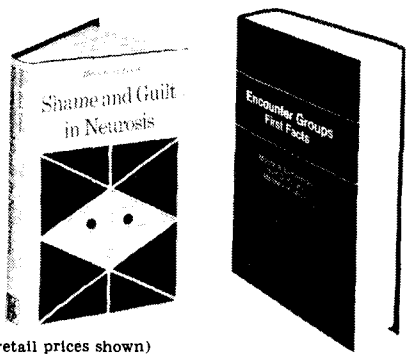

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erences and all of them revealed that Wallace 1972 supporters stood at the polar extreme from McGovernites on almost all issues. They were generally more conservative, particularly on cultural issues, questions of law and order, and busing than Nixon backers. Further, insofar as polls queried Wallace supporters as to their second choice, or their two-party Presidential preference, they went to Nixon by two or three to one.

The evidence of voter volatility cited by Mr. Auspitz makes good sense. In general, it resembles the patterns reported in 1968 as well. Before coming to any final conclusion as to who shifted and why during the campaign, we prefer to wait for the findings of the sophisticated investigation of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan.

There can be little question that party loyalties are weak in America. It is doubtful, however, that this is a new phenomenon. A look at the shifts which have occurred since 1946 suggests that the bulk of the electorate has been "available" on the Presidential level since Roosevelt died. There have been massive changes in every election from 1948 on. But again, it would seem clear that for a candidate to be perceived as at the "extreme" end of his party is a liability. "Moderate" Democrats, Republicans, and independents will turn to the more moderate candidate. Those to the Left of the Democrats or Right of the Republicans usually wind up voting for the "lesser evil" on their side. Humphrey lost relatively few votes on his Left. The various 1968 surveys do indicate, however, that he lost many in the "Center"—people who reacted against the demonstrations and violence at the Chicago convention and felt that these events indicated that the Democrats could not govern effectively. That is, most people who sympathized with the demonstrations ended up voting for Humphrey. A much larger proportion of non-Republicans who did not, backed Richard Nixon in 1968. A coalition must be oriented to finding those votes which will carry it over the 50 per-cent mark; they are almost always to be found in the Center, among voters who might go to the other coalitions.

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "The New Politics & the Democrats" [December 1972] Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik raise one objection to what seems to me to be the fairest solution to the problem of choosing a President—a national primary with provision for a run-off if no candidate receives 40 per cent of the vote in the first election. Their objection is that primaries give "an advantage to energetic minorities." It is probable, however, that a *national* primary would bring out the mainstream Democrats these authors wish to see return to the party. But of course if the now disaffected Southerners, unionists, etc. still did not choose to vote, there would be little that could be done to register their preferences.

A second objection to a national primary is that it would be wrong to give people who are state Democrats but Presidential Republicans (most Southern Democrats) so much power over naming the nominee. The problem is a real one, but unless we are prepared to concede to the Republicans about half the electoral votes needed to elect a President . . . , concessions to the South must be made. . . .

A third major objection is that the cost of such a national primary would increase our already huge campaign expenditures and thus dangerously increase the power of the wealthy to dictate choices. This too is a basically elitist view which assumes that the average voter has no real beliefs and can be easily manipulated by slick media campaigns. There is little evidence for this contention. The most famous media campaign in history, the Nixon effort in 1968, probably lost votes for its candidate, judging from Nixon's drop in the polls from August to November of that year. . . .

The irrational system by which we nominate our Presidential candidates is the last respectable repository of anti-democratic practice in the United States. . . .

Peter Connolly

New Haven, Connecticut

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Penn Kemble and Josh Muravchik, in an article bulging with half-truths and innuendos, attempt to discredit the McGovern commission and to cast aspersions on the reform efforts within the Democratic party. Let me give a few examples. In a footnote, the authors discredit two decisions by Lawrence O'Brien without arguing the merits of either case. These decisions concerned the definition of a majority and the determination of eligibility to vote on challenges to members of a delegation. The decision to require 1,433 votes on the California challenge as constituting a majority was determined by the normal procedure—50 per cent of those eligible to vote. To require 1,509 votes for a majority would have required the McGovern forces to achieve a 52.65 per cent majority, obviously an unfair requirement. Nor do the authors present the facts on the other decision: in every single case on the convention floor, only those delegates—not delegations—who themselves were being challenged were prevented from voting on that challenge. Of the California delegation, 121 would have been seated regardless of the outcome of the California challenge. Since they themselves were not under challenge, those 121 were then of course allowed to vote on the challenge to the other 151 delegates.

In the article, the authors state that a representative of the Kentucky Democratic leadership was "dismayed when he was told that the rules required proportional representation by candidate preference in the election of delegates from each district." Dismayed? At giving a candidate the number of delegates he has earned and deserves? I am under the impression that one of the mandates of the 1968 convention was to eliminate the unit rule. The Kentucky system does so admirably. The Kentucky delegate system specifically provides that a minority of 15 per cent or more be granted mandatory representation at the convention. Only Kentucky and Iowa chose to adopt the 15-per-cent guideline, and in both cases proportional representation was, in fact, required, not "recommended" as suggested by the authors.

The authors suggest that the Daley slate had been chosen in an "open, fair election." They then suggest that the fact that the Daley organization "had not invited its opponents" (do they mean the people of Chicago?) "to participate in the drawing up of its slates," was a "reform technicality." One of the most important ideas to come from the McGovern commission was that everyone who wanted to run as a national delegate should have an equal opportunity to be judged by the people of the party as a whole and not just by the party leadership. But if the slates are drawn

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up by a closed, non-representative group, the choice of the people in "open, fair elections" is meaningless. Boss Tate of Philadelphia always maintained that democratic elections by the people were just fine with him, as long as he could nominate the candidates, i.e., draw up the slates. Boss Daley understands this principle very well.

The authors then suggest that the McGovern people took unfair advantage of the reform rules in terms of challenges. Since any individual or group could challenge the Credentials Committee (which by the way was controlled by a coalition of anti-McGovern delegates), how is it possible, as the authors suggest, that "in states where McGovern forces themselves violated the guidelines, the chosen slates were often allowed to go unchallenged"?

Finally, the authors say that "the delegation from Iowa did not have even one farmer." Bob Burke, RR1, DeWitt, Iowa and George Leonard, Elkader, Iowa were both delegates from Iowa to the 1972 National Convention. They represented one-third of the delegates from the Second District of Iowa. And both are farmers. (Let me add here that I am the Vice-Chairperson of the Linn County Iowa Democratic Committee and I was a member of the 1972 Credentials Committee and a delegate to the convention.) Of course if I were to use the Kemble-Muravchik technique, I would now suggest that this unresearched "fact" is typical of hundreds of other "facts" used as evidence to support the authors' contentions. However, I feel that the authors do raise some serious and valid objections to the commission guidelines (including some of their objections to the application of the unit rule to the California primary and some of their statements about quotas). Still, by trying to make a tighter case than can really be made, they have opened up their own credibility gap. . . .

ROBERT M. VAN DEUSEN
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

PENN KEMBLE and JOSH MURAVCHIK write:

To Peter Connolly: Our objection to a national primary is rooted in the conviction that political parties are an essential element of democracy. Parties facilitate the congealing of interest groups and bargaining and interaction among groups with similar or compatible interests. They provide a framework which facilitates national debate and they provide a guide for the individual voter, who may not know, or feel he can know, the merits of each candidate in every election. They make possible the representation of the rank-and-file voter in the day-to-day political functions in which he cannot conceivably participate.

A national primary would go far toward emasculating the parties, reducing them to mere nominating vehicles. This was precisely one of our objections to the McGovern rules. A national primary takes the decisions out of the hands of grassroots leadership which has (of course with unfortunate exceptions) an authentic and sustained relationship with the rank and file, and places the decisions where they are maximally subject to the influence of large contributors and clever media manipulators, and the impact of momentary events.

The soundest method of Presidential nomination, in our view, is one resting heavily on ongoing, representative party structure. The rules which will be devised for 1976 will, we hope, be geared to democratizing party structure, not abolishing it.

To Robert M. van Deusen: Chairman O'Brien's two procedural rulings relating to the vote on the California challenge had a decisive impact on the outcome of the convention. In both cases O'Brien ruled in favor of the McGovern camp.

Arguments based on "fairness" can be (and were) mustered on both sides of those questions. But, on a basis of strict "legality," the cases made by the anti-McGovern forces were the more compelling. On the question of whether a majority of the number of delegates or a majority of those eligible to vote should have been required on the challenge, the temporary rules of the convention were clear. They read in part: "Except as otherwise provided in these rules, all questions . . . shall be determined by a majority vote of the delegates to the convention." Nowhere in the rules was it "otherwise provided" that on credentials challenges only a majority of those eligible to vote was required.

On the question of the eligibility of 120 California McGovern delegates to vote on the challenge, it is not we who fail to present the facts, but Mr. van Deusen who fails to understand them. (The footnote

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in the article to which this discussion refers wrongly uses the figure 151, which represented the number of votes McGovern stood to lose. At dispute in the procedural ruling was the status of the other 120 seats to which California was entitled—the minimum number to which McGovern would have been entitled regardless of the outcome of the challenge.) The challenge was drawn, and upheld by the Credentials Committee, as a challenge to the *entire* California delegation, not, as in the case of other states, a challenge only to a specific segment of the delegation.

Even if the McGovernites believe that they had the stronger case from the point of view of plain "fairness," it is hard to see how they can argue that "fairness" should have had precedence over "legality" in determining the procedures for the vote on the California challenge. It was they, after all, who stridently asserted in regard to the substance of that challenge that even though the winner-take-all rule was unfair, they should still get all the delegates because the "rules of the game" had to be upheld.

We are not interested in entering into a debate over whether the principle of fairness or of legality ought to have been decisive, only in pointing out that these decisions merited serious discussion. The point of interest is that at the convention described by the reformers as the true instrument of the party's rank and file, the decisions which determined the outcome were made by the party chairman alone.

As for Kentucky, Mr. van Deusen seems simply to misunderstand the point. The Kentucky Democratic party did, as he states, adopt a 15-per-cent rule which required proportional representation. We pointed out, however, that it did so because its leaders had been wrongly informed by McGovern-commission staffers that the McGovern rules required the state party to adopt such a system, when in fact the rules only "recommended" it.

Mr. van Deusen's defense of the Chicago challenge reflects the inability of many reformers to distinguish the definition of democratic procedure from their own electoral success. The McGovern rule under which Daley *et al.* were unseated forbade any group to submit a slate to the electorate without a pre-announced public slate-making meeting open to everyone. Thus any tightly organized group

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of even a few score people could effectively deny its opponents access to the ballot by packing every slate-making meeting. Daley's group was turned out of the convention not because it had sought to keep its opposition off the ballot, but because it refused to give the opposition the chance to keep it off the ballot! Democratic procedure, it seems to us, requires that, say, Jesse Jackson have the right to enter a slate opposed to Daley's, not that he have the "right" to be on Daley's slate.

The Credentials Committee, as Mr. van Deusen could hardly have been unaware, was not "controlled by a coalition of anti-McGovern delegates." It was, rather, deadlocked by two equally strong factions, with a bare handful of swing votes in the middle. That was why the anti-McGovern bloc could win narrowly on the California challenge, while the McGovern bloc was victorious on the Chicago, Georgia, and downstate Illinois challenges. It also explains why the McGovernites made out fairly well in the wholesale trading of challenges which took place behind the scenes. For example, the McGovern camp withdrew support from the Connecticut challenge—which had clear merit in relation to the guidelines, but wasn't likely to increase McGovern's vote total—in return for withdrawal of an anti-McGovern challenge from Indiana, which would have cost McGovern a few votes.

This trading bears on Mr. van Deusen's question about why the McGovern slates generally went unchallenged. The ironic fact is that the "bosses," although perhaps reluctantly, took the reforms seriously and at face value; the McGovernites never did. To them they were tools for factional maneuver. The regulars labored under the illusion that the reformers were really interested only in "reform" and could be mollified by good-faith efforts at compliance which, although mildly irritating, would then free the traditional party leadership to proceed with its business. The main concern of the "regulars" has always been winning elections. They were not anxious to see a plethora of challenges and disputes which would (and did) turn the convention into a self-defeating spectacle. They didn't realize until it was too late (the California challenge was a last-minute effort) what the McGovernites knew from the outset: that under "reform" rules, the name of the game was credentials.

Finally, the Iowa farmers. There were 46 delegates from Iowa. Our own pre-convention survey turned up no farmers among them. The CBS News survey taken at the convention confirms Mr. van Deusen's claim that delegate Burke listed his occupation as farmer. It does not list George Leonard as having been a delegate at all, but rather as having been an alternate.

Thus it seems we were off by one, and were possibly even off by two, in our figures. But their meaning is still the same. Despite all the claims to representativeness, despite the quotas for women, blacks, and youth, the 1972 Democratic convention was wildly unrepresentative of the Democratic constituency. Workers were underrepresented from industrial states and farmers were underrepresented from the farm states. The debate on how accurately the 1972 convention reflected the American electorate ended, in our view, on Election Day, when Iowa, like the rest of the nation, fell squarely in the anti-McGovern column.

One final note of correction: Robert Nelson was identified in the article as administrative assistant to Eugene McCarthy when he actually was administrative assistant to McGovern.

Dayan

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his perceptive article on Moshe Dayan ["Dayan as Politician," January], Hillel Halkin analyzes the positions of the Israeli Right and the Labor government toward the occupied territories and demonstrates that neither side has any claim to moral purity. Unfortunately, however, Dayan's own thoughts on the matter are only mentioned in passing. Mr. Halkin also prefers not to draw the obvious conclusion—namely, that Dayan's program combines the worst aspects of both the government and the opposition plans, and is completely devoid of any moral justification.

As Mr. Halkin notes, the Right in Israel calls for immediate annexation of the West Bank and Gaza, but would offer their inhabitants full Israeli citizenship. The Labor government, on the other hand, professes to oppose annexation of most heavily-populated areas; yet it seems content to permit an indefinite prolongation of the status quo, which leaves the Arabs in those areas as stateless non-citizens. What is Dayan's solution? He advocates both annexation of the territories *and* denial of Israeli citizenship to the Arab population.

Dayan's statements are never entirely clear, and it may be that he envisions something less than formal annexation. There is no doubt, however, that in his view the territories are to remain under Israel's firm control. His proposal to grant the Arabs Jordanian citizenship is therefore meaningless and insulting. Of what use is Jordanian citizenship in the West Bank if Jordan does not enjoy sovereignty there?

A number of Israeli politicians and columnists, realizing the ominous implications of Dayan's proposal, have vigorously attacked it as a veiled form of colonialism. Their distress is understandable when we realize that Dayan is the first major Zionist leader to suggest that a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict be based upon a rejection of democratic principles. What Mr. Halkin describes as Dayan's empathy for the Arabs does not make this fact any less disturbing.

Mr. Halkin believes that Dayan will be Prime Minister someday. He doesn't seem to realize how dangerous a prospect that may be.

Eric H. Yoffie

New York City

Hillel Halkin writes:

I mentioned Moshe Dayan's thoughts on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip only "in passing" because these thoughts are not much clearer to me than they are to Eric H. Yoffie himself. As far as I understand them, however, I agree with Mr. Yoffie that they do not represent either a democratic or an ultimately desirable solution to the problem. At the same time, however, I find it difficult to accept the opinion that it would be better for the inhabitants of the West Bank to be stateless than to carry a Jordanian passport, which, if nothing else, at least permits them to travel freely in the Arab world and elsewhere. Mr. Yoffie also seems unaware of the potentialities in the distinction made by Israeli law between citizens of Israel and "permanent residents" who are citizens of other countries and have either not sought or not been granted Israeli nationality.

Members of the latter group, it is true, cannot participate in

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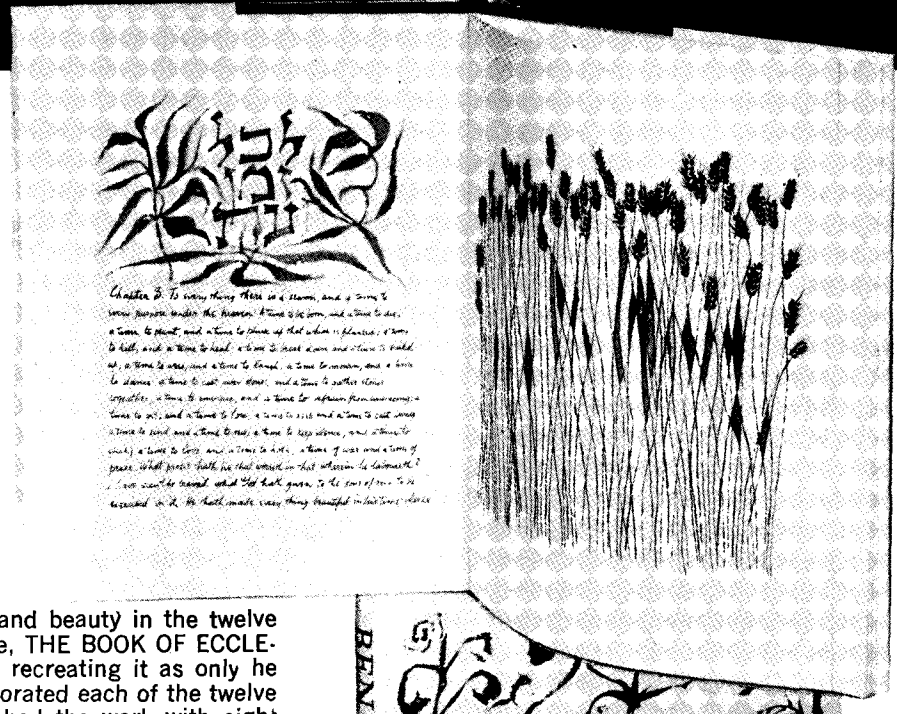

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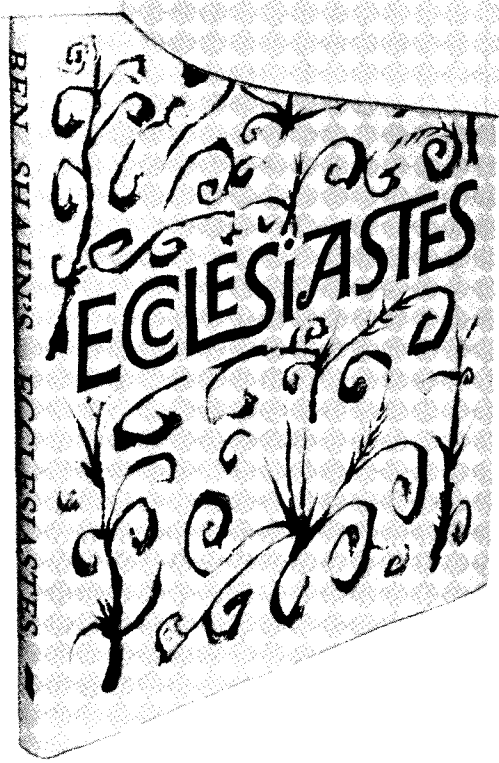

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national elections for the Knesset, but they are able to vote in all local elections. This is currently the status of most of the Arabs of East Jerusalem, and it is presumably the one that Dayan has in mind for the inhabitants of the occupied territories as well, who would thereby be given at least a degree of local autonomy. It was Dayan, indeed, who was instrumental in sponsoring the municipal elections held in the major towns of the West Bank in 1972, and who, it is rumored, pressed unsuccessfully for widening the severely limited franchise decreed by Jordanian law, which bars women and non-property-owners from the polls. The Palestinian resistance organizations may disagree, but the high turnout at these elections would seem to indicate that the average West Bank resident prefers having some political say, no matter how small, to none at all.

Mr. Yoffie does not care for Dayan, and I think I can understand why; I myself am ambivalent toward him, as, I think, are many Israelis. On the one hand, he seems to me the only major political figure in Israel sufficiently free of the dead weight of past rhetoric to be capable of taking a fresh look at the country's problems, the Palestinian one included; on the other hand, his record on basic issues of the democratic process has been worrisomely spotty at best, including the Palestinian question again. Conceivably, he *could* break up the current party logjam which makes Israeli politics today seem so stultifying and distressing; conceivably too, however, the logs could prove dangerous once they began to move, and in this respect I can share Mr. Yoffie's concern. Would I personally vote for Dayan if he were to run for the prime ministry the next time around? The honest answer would have to be that I really don't know.

NPG

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

For some reason I'm not on the population-control mailing lists, but through the kindness of a correspondent, I am in receipt of a curious pendant to my "The Population Controllers" [May 1972]. It is a manifesto announcing the establishment of Negative Population Growth, Inc., already being called by its promoters NPG, a convention sure to bedevil typesetters and copyreaders as time goes by. The emergency declared by NPG is like unto that declared by ZPG, only more so; the prescription for it is the same, only more so; and there is the same taste for coercion, only more so. We are going to be allowed a choice between one-child and what they quaintly call "child-free" families, until such time as the U.S. population is halved. Then we can go back to two. We will be thus restricted by Any Means Necessary, although there is a ritual statement admitting the theoretical possibility of, but not a preference for, voluntary measures so long as we are willing to go along quietly. NPG intends to sponsor what it chooses to call "research" to demonstrate that this depopulation, far from being economically troublesome, will be downright pleasant for persons now alive. Readers of my piece will not be surprised to learn that Edgar Chasteen is on NPG's advisory board, which includes such distinguished scholars as Sir Julian Huxley, Luther Evans, and Shirley MacLaine.

Well, I suppose people so slovenly of language, indeed so pathetically divorced from the realm of ideas as to accept a verbal monstrosity like "negative growth" will believe anything. I fully expect the next year to see the birth (sorry) of ZBG (Zero Birth Group) Inc., arguing that since the resources of the earth will not outlast those now on it, reproduction must be made a capital offense.

But the madness represented by NPG is sufficient unto the day; its founding indicates that the extremists in the movement have found each other. Perhaps thus united is thus isolated, but the tendency for hysterical movements to end up led by their extremists is not reassuring.

SAMUEL MCCRACKEN
London, England

War Crimes

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

"The Question of War Crimes" by Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. [December 1972] is a useful contribution to the discussion because Mr. Bishop's ideological perspective

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has been underrepresented in the recent literature on the subject. It also illustrates the fatal flaw of this point of view: the deliberate evasion of political judgment when value considerations reach saliency.

First example: Speaking of the bombings of Vietnam, Mr. Bishop says: "Whether they were an excessive or 'disproportionate' use of force, and therefore illegal, depends on whether those goals could have been achieved by less and more discriminating force—a military question which I am no more competent to decide than is Professor Falk or Mr. Clark."

If a specialist on the laws of war is not competent to evaluate military actions in the light of the law, then who is? The implication is that only the military is competent, but if this is so, of what value are legal systems, including our own, which constantly call upon judges and lay juries to choose from among conflicting expert opinions?

Second example: After indicating his opinion that the bombings of Hamburg and Frankfurt during World War II were not war crimes, Mr. Bishop says, "but many people, including me, think that the bombing of Dresden fell into a different category. . . ."

But what kind of category does he mean? Mr. Bishop does not give it the value-laden label "war crime," nor any label at all. It is just a category that is different from Hamburg and Frankfurt, neither legal nor illegal, neither good nor bad. Such a category does not advance our understanding of war crimes; it merely helps us to avoid facing them.

I believe that Mr. Bishop's insistence on evading the central value questions explains the irrelevant and excessive preoccupation with Jane Fonda that mars his otherwise scholarly article. Miss Fonda speaks from conscience, not academic specialization. As an amateur, Miss Fonda is not so ill-informed, and the voice of conscience is not in such abundant supply as to deserve the contempt of intellectuals. But conscience aside, one might question whether international law is served by an expert's failure to gather the information necessary to support an opinion on whether the bombings of Vietnam constitute war crimes.

MARSHALL WINDMILLER
California State University
San Francisco, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr. argues that some of the things considered by Richard Falk to be war crimes are not in fact criminal, and that insofar as we have committed war crimes in Vietnam, "the record of North Vietnam and the Vietcong is much worse." . . . He says that the South Vietnamese, when they voted with their feet by fleeing from an area of combat, "always flee away from the North Vietnamese, never to territory occupied by them, which strongly suggests that these experienced observers fear the North Vietnamese more than they fear the Thieu regime." In some cases, however; the same phenomenon suggests the exact contrary. We know that only one side used bombers, and moreover used them to a degree unprecedented in history. It would seem reasonable then to want to escape the bombing and to flee from a "free-fire zone." The direction of flight thus suggests that these "experienced observers" feared the Thieu regime (and the American bombers) more than they feared the other side.

The deserters from Saigon's army, a group not mentioned by Mr. Bishop, also voted with their feet. Surely in many cases this was a vote against conditions of war, not a vote in favor of Hanoi. . . .

EUGENE PRANGE
Boston, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his very informative article, Joseph W. Bishop, Jr., indicates that he does not know and cannot imagine the legal justification advanced by North Vietnam for its failure to apply the Third Geneva Convention dealing with the treatment of prisoners of war, other than the fallacious argument that the conflict was purely a civil war within South Vietnam in which no North Vietnamese troops were engaged. Actually, the legal position of North Vietnam was made clear in debates on the subject at the United Nations and elsewhere. Like most other socialist-bloc nations, it ratified the Geneva Convention with a reservation initially insisted upon by the Soviet Union when it refused to accord any international protection to "war criminals," to wit, prisoners tried and convicted for war crimes as defined at the Nuremberg trials. Soviet legal commentaries of the time, however, made explicitly clear that a prisoner could be

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denied Geneva Convention protection only upon trial and conviction for such heinous crimes and *only* upon exhaustion of all rights of appeal by the convicted war criminal.

North Vietnam did not prosecute any American prisoner for such "war crimes" and none stands convicted. Accordingly, North Vietnam's unilateral declaration that all our prisoners were "war criminals" because the entire American war effort was deemed criminal has no legal validity whatsoever and cannot be raised as a proper defense for the failure of North Vietnam to apply the provisions of the Third Geneva Convention to our captured soldiers. To permit such a defense would negate the very basis of the Convention, which is to afford humanitarian treatment to enemy prisoners irrespective of the nature, conduct, or politics of the war in question.

The United States vigorously refuted the North Vietnam "war crimes" defense during the General Assembly debates of 1969 and 1970. As the American representative in those debates—I was at that time United States Representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights—I can aver that most other delegations gave no serious legal credence to North Vietnam's "defense," which was asserted on its behalf by its friends at the UN. The contention of North Vietnam was purely political, and did not rise to the level of serious consideration under international law.

RITA E. HAUSER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The article concludes with Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s defensive approach to his thesis when he says he is "talking like a lawyer" (rather than as a moralist). On the contrary, however, my colleague is not talking like a lawyer at all, for he is deliberately omitting or misstating rules of law and refusing to act on evidence—the exact reverse of the traditional role of a lawyer. In fact, Mr. Bishop is acting like a politician, for his article is simply a way of avoiding the obvious legal ramifications of the war in Vietnam with respect to American political leaders; i.e., that they should at least be tried for the same kinds of war crimes that resulted in the hanging of many people at Nur-

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emberg. The State Department took a rather similar approach to the war in its publications, although, in fairness to Mr. Bishop, it also advanced some obviously unsatisfactory moral justification for the war.

An expert in international law would not offhandedly dismiss the Charter of the United Nations which specifically forbids war as a means of settling international disputes. The "right of self-defense" mentioned in the Charter —whether individual or collective —can hardly apply to the United States position in Vietnam because a country has no right to self-defense against itself and, as the 1954 Geneva Agreements make perfectly clear, there is but one Vietnam. That there has been a separate regime in the South is, as everyone well knows, an American creation in flagrant violation of those self-same Geneva Agreements. Moreover, the United Nations Charter's discussion of "collective self-defense" only applies to the member states of the United Nations, and South Vietnam has no such status. Indeed, South Vietnam does not even meet the general international-law definition of a state since it does not have control over a well-defined territory and population.

Mr. Bishop argues that there is "very little hard evidence against . . . the United States's contention that much effort was expended . . . to limit the risk that bombs would kill noncombatants or destroy non-military property." Perhaps that is the way it looks from Yale, but that is not the way it looked in North Vietnam where, as early as 1968, outside of Hanoi and Haiphong, almost every single structure in the country not made of thatch showed obvious bomb damage. To view North Vietnam today . . . would make complete mockery of Mr. Bishop's parroting of the administration's absurd position on the bombing question.

Finally, Mr. Bishop contends that the resettlement of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians was not, as our enemies contend, a concentration scheme, but was in fact a humanitarian move to save their lives by removing them from the war zone. A reading of any respectable press in the world, however, makes perfectly clear that resettlement had nothing to do with areas of combat or war zones, but was designed to eliminate indigenous support for the National Liberation Front in certain areas of South Vietnam. By putting thousands of people in concentration camps, successions of South Vietnamese regimes simply attempted to keep these people and their crops away from the National Liberation Front. That action is, as Leonard Boudin and many others have concluded, "in all contexts [a] war crime. . . ."

MALCOLM BURNSTEIN
Oakland, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph W. Bishop, Jr.'s excellent article on the history and application of the international law of war to the Vietnam conflict goes far to expose the masquerade of moral indignation by distinguished scholars which has been passing as legal analysis in recent years. Nevertheless, the fact is that the observation of the laws of war by all of the major parties to the conflict—the United States, Saigon, Hanoi, and the Vietcong—has been deplorable. Witness:

If the United States at least nominally observed the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War it consistently ignored the Hague Regulations. As a matter of law, the right of a belligerent to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited. The scale and targets of the American bombardment in North Vietnam simply cannot be reconciled with the absolute legal prohibition on the bombardment of undefended towns and villages.

The government of South Vietnam, on the other hand, to whom the United States turned over prisoners taken in the field, gave little more than lip service to the very Prisoner of War Convention which this country goaded Hanoi to observe.

The evidence suggests that the Democratic Government of North Vietnam, which steadfastly and infuriatingly refused to acknowledge the applicability of the Geneva Conventions at all, did, in fact, observe those elements of the Prisoner of War Convention which were applicable to civil conflict. Since any application of the conventional law to the facts suggests that the prisoners should enjoy the benefits of the full Convention, Hanoi deserves only the damnation of faint praise for its simplistic humanitarianism.

As for the National Liberation Front, which often kept its prisoners in cages, it suffered the classical lack of resources that makes it impossible for any primitive power to comply with the laws of war even if it wishes to do so.

Lawyers say that "hard cases make bad law." (One of the principal casualties of this outrageous war is the law itself.) The Vietnam conflict has revealed the glaring inadequacy of the laws of war in contemporary warfare. A few examples: The poor civilians of South Vietnam did not enjoy the protection of international law at all because technically the U.S. and Saigon were co-belligerents and, as Mr. Bishop properly observes, the Civilian Convention is for the protection of persons in occupied enemy territory. The Vietcong did not wear insignia or carry arms openly and hence were technically spies, guerrillas, and saboteurs rather than soldiers entitled to legal protection. (Although, to its credit, the U.S. extended the application of the law to the NLF in theory, this did not help them much as GVN captives.) Even the nature of the conflict itself eluded the precise "civil" or "international" characterization that is central to the application of the law. It is therefore difficult to be certain of which laws were even applicable to which situations. In short, modern warfare has moved faster than legal reform.

The long list of inadequacies of the law has been well documented in a major army study, which inexplicably has been classified "secret" since 1969. But, alas, in a world in which 133 members of the UN could not even reach agreement on terrorism or hijacking, it is difficult to imagine what the 136 signatories to the Geneva Convention would do about the law even if the failure of the Conventions was public knowledge.

RICHARD I. MILLER
Harbridge House, Inc.
Boston, Massachusetts

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. writes:

Marshall Windmiller condemns me for "the deliberate evasion of political judgment when value considerations reach saliency," which I take to be his way of saying, in the Newspeak of the New Politics, that the lawfulness of an act depends upon the actor's politics. Ideology may have a place in deciding what the law should be, but I see no role for it in the application of law. A war criminal is no less criminal because I

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like his politics and no more so because I dislike them.

I should have thought it obvious that a specialist in military *law* is not necessarily competent to make determinations of fact, turning on complex evidence whose evaluation requires other kinds of military expertise. I teach torts and am reasonably familiar with the law applicable to medical malpractice, but there are few such cases which I would decide without hearing expert testimony.

I certainly meant to state that in my opinion the bombing of Dresden—about which the facts are today pretty well known—was a violation of the law of war, and I thought I did so. If it fell in "a different category" from acts which were not violations, it could only be because it *was* a violation. I don't see what third category there could be.

As for Jane Fonda, I picked on her only because her statements are so typical of her sort of mental process, and she gets so much publicity. There are, of course, plenty of people like her, but in most cases their names would not be familiar to ordinary readers.

Eugene Prange overstates a valid point. I don't know whether, in the relatively limited areas overrun by the North Vietnamese, there were places which were not in the vicinity of North Vietnamese troops or supplies. Interviews published in the *Times* indicated that the refugees feared the North Vietnamese, but probably both motives were at work.

Rita E. Hauser's letter is enlightening. I was aware of the Communist reservation to the Geneva POW Convention, but it was so obviously inapplicable to the American POW's in North Vietnam that it did not occur to me that North Vietnam and its allies would have raised it. I suppose they had to take whatever arguments they could get.

Malcolm Burnstein's letter is so purely political in its language, assumptions, and conclusions that there is really nothing for me to say about it.

I agree with much of Richard I. Miller's letter, especially the last two paragraphs. It should, however, be noted that the Hague Regulations' prohibition of "bombardment, by whatever means, of towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings which are undefended" has never been construed by any of the signatories to bar the bombardment (by artillery, aircraft, or any other means) of military targets in the enemy's rear, even though they are defended only by the presence of his armed forces between them and the attacker and are not fortified or equipped with anti-aircraft weapons.

A Puzzlement

To the Editor of Commentary:

To judge from the letters that are sent to the editor of Commentary and subsequently printed, the average reader of your magazine is, instead of an enlightened, curious intellectual, concerned about both sides of a question, an insufferable, self-righteous prig. This is odd, since your letter-writers are, for the most part, professors, bureaucrats, writers, and students. While one's illusions about the above-named professions have been shattered over the course of the last few years, it is strange to see such narrow-mindedness and intolerance in action. Indeed, one is inclined to think that Commentary, which makes great efforts to be reasoned and intelligent, is like a red flag to the Establishment intellectuals of America. Whenever your contributors write an article that flouts a liberal myth, outraged letters, sealed with froth, come pouring in. . . .

My great puzzlement at this perpetual outrage stems from the status of Commentary's contributors: Walter Laqueur, Irving Howe, Daniel P. Moynihan. These are none of your garden-variety heretics like William F. Buckley, Jr. or James Burnham. . . .

Thus, and although I stand ready to be corrected, I am growing wary of the kind of individual your letter-writing readers represent: the powerful, well-established intellectual bigot. . . .

Philip Brantingham

Chicago, Illinois

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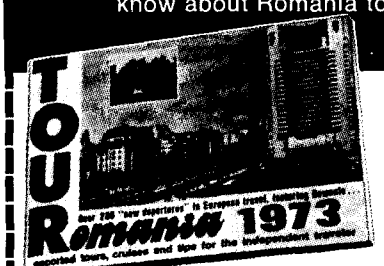

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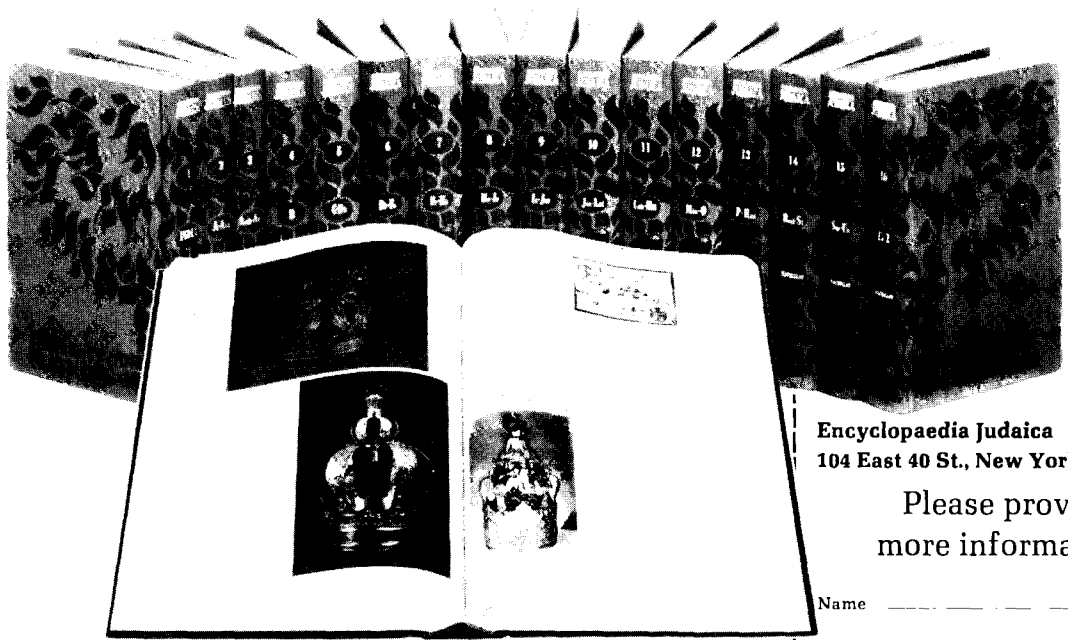

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Black Progress and Liberal Rhetoric

Ben J. Wattenberg and Richard M. Scammon

A REMARKABLE development has taken place in America over the last dozen years: for the first time in the history of the republic, truly large and growing numbers of American blacks have been moving into the middle class, so that by now these numbers can reasonably be said to add up to a *majority* of black Americans—a slender majority, but a majority nevertheless.

This development, which has occurred against a historical backdrop of social and economic discrimination, is nothing short of revolutionary. Despite the fact that Southern blacks are economically still significantly worse off than Northern, and older blacks than younger, and despite the fact too that the economic and social gap separating whites and blacks is still a national disgrace, "middle class" has now become an accurate term to describe the social and economic condition of somewhat more than half of black Americans.

What does "middle class" mean in this context? Obviously any line that is drawn in the sociological sand must have about it something of the arbitrary and the artificial, yet there are a number of statistical criteria—notably in the areas of income, job patterns, and education—that serve to measure the relative standing of groups (as well, of course, as individuals) in society, and these indices have an unambiguous tale to tell about the recent economic and social movement of American blacks. Obviously, too, "middle class" as used here does not refer to a condition of affluence, to a black population made up of doctors, lawyers, and businessmen with cabin cruisers (although such blacks certainly do exist). It refers rather to the condition of that vast majority of working-class Americans who, although often hard-pressed, have safely put poverty behind them and are now looking ahead, no longer back; it refers not only to engineers and teachers, but also to plasterers, painters, bus drivers, lathe operators, secretaries, bank tellers, and automobile assembly-line workers: the kinds of people who, when they are white, are described as "Middle Americans" or members of the silent, real, or new American majorities. It refers, in the words of the economist Thomas Sowell, who is himself black, to "black men and women who go to work five days a week, pay their bills, try to find some happiness for themselves, and raise their children to be decent people with better prospects than they had. . . ."

To belong to this "middle class" means, first, to have enough to eat, to have adequate, if not necessarily expensive, clothes to wear, and to be able to afford housing that is safe and sanitary. But that is only the beginning. The advent of a majority of blacks into the middle-income class has triggered a domino-like movement throughout American society. Once the necessities of food, shelter, and clothing are provided for, a vast flow of secondary desires follows. A middle-income family wants not only a house that is safe and sanitary but one in a safe and sanitary neighborhood. Middle-income parents want their children to go to good schools, to stay in high school and graduate and, they hope, then go on to college. The young adults who come out of high school and college want better jobs than those their parents have held, the kinds of jobs that have always been available to whites in an equivalent socioeconomic position.

The middle-income blacks, as we shall see, have made much headway toward satisfying all these traditional middle-class desires. Their progress has hardly been trouble-free; as is the case with all forms of sharp economic movement, it has been accompanied by considerable social turbulence, much of it occasioned by race prejudice, and it has had a tremendous impact on the political life of the nation at large. But it is real progress, a massive achievement; and to all appearances it is here to stay.

This is a phenomenon of enormous portent for the future of American society. That it should have come about, as it has, at a time when many

BEN J. WATTENBERG and RICHARD M. SCAMMON are the co-authors of *This U.S.A.* and *The Real Majority*. Mr. Wattenberg was an aide to President Lyndon B. Johnson and was instrumental in the government's publication in 1967 and 1968 of "Social and Economic Conditions of Negroes in the United States." He has also worked as a political aide to Senator Hubert Humphrey and Senator Henry Jackson. Mr. Scammon, Director of the Elections Research Center in Washington, was the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau from 1961-65 and has also served as a consultant to the Civil Rights Commission. The present essay, in somewhat different form, will appear in their forthcoming study of change in America in the last decade (Doubleday).

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civil-rights leaders and liberals alike have insisted that conditions for American blacks are not improving at all, but actually deteriorating, is not the least astonishing aspect of the entire episode. It will be a great and tragic irony if this insistence on failure should in the end prove a hindrance to the continued upward progress of American blacks.

I

THE first and most basic index of status in American life is money, and it is therefore to comparative income statistics that we must turn first to show the broad outlines of black upward mobility in the 1960's. According to the 1970 census figures, income for white families in America went up by 69 per cent in the 1960's, while income for black families* went up by 99.6 per cent. If we round off the 99.6 per cent figure it can be stated that black family income actually doubled during a single decade!†

The *ratio* of black family income to white family income also changed dramatically in the period, climbing from 53 per cent in 1961 to 63 percent in 1971. It might be argued—and rightly—that 63 per cent is a long way from 100 per cent and still scandalously low, but what is open to little argument is that there has been sharp progress —a catching up—during recent years which was not at all apparent during the previous decade (the ratio of black to white family incomes was the same in 1961 as it had been in 1951). And the changing percentage of black families earning above $10,000 is even more startling, jumping from 13 per cent in 1961 to 30 per cent in 1971 (from 1951 to 1961 the percentage had increased from 3 to 13); these figures are in 1971 constant dollars, the effects of inflation having been factored out.

The median family income in the United States in 1971 was $10,285; today, it can be estimated at $11,000. This figure represents the middle-of-the-middle of family income distribution. Some lower figure—say, $8,000 outside the South—may be said to represent the bottom-of-the-middle or the beginning of middle-income status in America. In the South, where median income averages almost $2,000 lower, and where a disproportionate number of blacks still lives, the bottom-of-the-middle line may be drawn at $6,000. By these criteria, and again adjusting for recent income increases, just over half of black families in the United States are by now economically in the middle class (about 52 per cent).

The march of blacks across the invisible line into the lower-middle and middle classes may be seen even more clearly by looking at the data on the regional rather than on the national level, and by breaking down the figures by age and family characteristics. Thus, there is a sharp difference between black income in the South and black income elsewhere. Whereas in 1970 black family income in the South was 57 per cent of white family income, outside the South the corresponding figure was 74 per cent. A second variable affecting black-white income ratios is family status. As we shall note later, black families are much more likely than white families to be "female-headed," but when they are *not*—when the families are "husband-wife" families—income is much likelier to approach equality with comparable white family incomes. Among black husband-wife families all over America in 1970, income was 73 per cent of white family income. Outside the South it was 88 per cent. But perhaps the most encouraging, and most significant, cross-tabulation of the income data concerns the economic status of young blacks. These young men and women have made striking educational gains in recent years; they have made gains in "occupation" as well, i.e., in the sorts of jobs they hold; and they have made gains in the amounts of money they earn. Black males aged 25-34, for example, earn 80 per cent of white levels of income on a national basis.

When one combines all these factors—youth, non-Southern residence, and an unbroken family —a truly striking statistic emerges. The median income of black husband-wife families, in the North and West, with the head of family under 35 years of age, rose from 78 per cent of white income in 1959 to *96* per cent in 1970. There is a word to describe that figure: parity. And if we add a fourth variable to the equation, and examine families in which both the husband and wife work, the figures come out to 85 per cent in 1959, and in 1970—104 per cent! For such families, parity has not only been achieved, it has even been surpassed: young, married blacks, outside of the South, with husband and wife both working, earn as much as or a trifle more than comparable whites.**

---

* These figures are for "Negroes and other races." Throughout this essay the data used are either for "Negroes" or, when not available, for "Negroes and Other Races" as defined by the Census Bureau. Since "Negroes" comprise 90 per cent of this latter category, the index may be considered relatively reliable for American blacks as a whole.

† The statement, however, would be accurate only if inflation had not eroded *everyone's* income. Taking inflation into account we find that the actual income increases come out to 34 per cent for whites and 59 per cent for blacks.

** Some, but by no means all, of these remarkable husband-wife family gains are due to the fact that young black wives outside of the South are somewhat more likely to work year 'round than young white wives (52 per cent versus 36 per cent). However, it is important to note that in those same families the husbands were also making progress. They earned 76 per cent of comparable white husbands in 1959—and 90 per cent of comparable white husbands in 1970.

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II

If income statistics are the most basic index of economic mobility in the United States, employment patterns follow closely behind. For the last two decades the reality of the black-white employment situation can be summed up, bleakly, as follows: black unemployment rates have been twice as high as white rates. But in recent years a massive shift has occurred in the identity of the black unemployed. A cross-tabulation of married men over age 20 reveals a far sharper *drop* in unemployment among blacks than for the population as a whole, as is shown by this comparison of two early years of the 60's with two early years of the 70's:

Unemployment Rate and Black-to-White Ratio for Married Men, 20 Years and Over, with Spouse Present, 1962 to 1972

	Negro & Other Races %	*White* %	*Ratio*
1962	7.9	3.1	2.5 to 1
1963	6.8	3.0	2.3 to 1
1971	4.9	3.0	1.6 to 1
1972	4.4	2.6	1.7 to 1

The drop in the ratio from 1962 to 1972 is 53 per cent (from 2.5 to 1, to 1.7 to 1—with 1 to 1 representing parity). Here, too, then, we see a steady and powerful movement into the middle class. Black family men are, like white family men, "at work," that is, at least 95 out of 100 of them are, even during recessionary times.

At the same time, teen-age unemployment has gone up. Among the 1.9 million black teen-agers (age 16-19), unemployment rates in 1960 were 24 per cent; by 1970, the rate had climbed to 29 per cent, and by 1971 to 32 per cent. The rate for white teen-agers fluctuated between 13 and 15 per cent in the same years. These comparative data are discouraging, but there is something to be said about them that is not generally understood. In 1971, of the 1.9 million black teen-agers, 1.25 million were "not in the labor force" at all (about a million were students, most of the rest housewives). They were neither "at work" nor "looking for work," and thus not tabulated in unemployment statistics. Of the 650,000 remaining black teen-agers, that is, those actually "in the labor force," more than two-thirds—about 450,000—were "at work." That left about 200,000 actually unemployed, i.e., "looking for work." The fraction 200,000 over 650,000 is what yielded the high "unemployment" rate—the percentage without jobs actively looking for work. But the fact is that even of these 200,000 unemployed black teen-agers, more than half—about 110,000—were *in school*, and about 90 per cent of these were looking for part-time work. That left about 100,000 black teen-agers—male and female—who were both out of work and out of school; this element represented not much more than 5 per cent of the total number of black teen-agers.

In other words, in 1971 about 70 per cent of black teen-agers were in school, about another 25 per cent were at work or at home as housewives; the rest—about 5 per cent—may be called the hard-core, full-time unemployed.*

On balance, then: teen-age unemployment rates are up, adult male rates are down, particularly among married males. Black teen-agers are mostly in school, adults are mostly supporting families. The net result would seem to be an important social and economic plus, despite the unfortunately large and continuing disproportion in black-white unemployment rates.

III

The overall employment pattern, of course, is made up of more than the statistics of who is at work and who is without work. Of equal significance is what *kinds* of jobs people hold. And here again we see major progress by blacks in gaining access to middle-class occupations, especially in the categories of "white-collar workers," "craftsmen," and "operatives":

Numbers of White-Collar Workers, Craftsmen, and Operatives, in Millions

	Negro	*White*
1960	2.9	46.1
1970	5.1	57.0
Percentage increase	*76*	*24*

Over the same decade the numbers of Negroes in "other" work—primarily low-paying jobs in private households, as service workers, farm workers, and laborers—decreased from 4 million to 3.5 million. Comparing, then, the balance of occupational status for blacks in America in 1960 and 1970, we find that in 1960 blacks in "good" jobs totaled 2.9 million while blacks in "not good" jobs totaled 4 million; by 1970 the number of blacks with "good" jobs totaled 5.1 million, while those with "not good" jobs totaled 3.4 million—in short, a reversal, and then some. In 1960, 42 per cent of blacks held "good" (i.e., middle-class) jobs—less than half. By 1970 the rate had climbed to 64 per cent—almost two-thirds.

Although final and detailed comparative figures on jobs are not at this writing available from the Census Bureau, the specific data we do have are enough to give a flavor of changes that have transpired over the decade. Thus, the 1960 Cen-

* To be sure, many of those who were in school or at home wanted, and needed, work, particularly part-time work, and could not get it. They needed money to help support themselves through school, to provide a second income to make ends meet, to help out their parents and siblings struggling at home with too little money and too many mouths to feed. But they were not the primary breadwinners, and their relative position has to be judged accordingly.

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sus reported 143,000 non-white teachers (other than college); the 1970 Census gave 223,000 Negro teachers. In 1960 there were 16,000 non-white social workers; in 1970 there were 41,000 black social workers. There were 12,600 male "plumbers and pipe-fitters" in 1960, 18,000 in 1970. The figures for machinists were 15,000 versus 23,600; for welders, 24,700 versus 44,200.

Many of the new and better jobs held by blacks are union jobs, and many of these are in the much-discussed construction trades, including the most highly skilled of these trades. Of particular interest are the apprenticeship figures—for these signal the way of the future. Today 13 per cent of the apprentices in the construction trades, and 20 per cent of those enrolled in the first half of 1972, are non-white. Curiously, despite all the talk about blacks and unions, one central fact is generally ignored: blacks are somewhat more likely—not less likely—to belong to unions than are whites. In 1970, black workers were 12 per cent of all union members. (Blacks are 11 per cent of the total population.)

Along with higher incomes and better jobs the 1960's also saw a great breakthrough in the area of education. Thus in 1960 only 36 per cent of young black males finished four years of high school, the educational level that seems to separate Americans into "middle class" and "non-middle class." By 1970 the rate was more than half—54 per cent. Among young black women the increase was even greater—from 41 per cent in 1960 to 61 per cent in 1971. If we take a longer range view, say over the last thirty years, the great educational leap forward of young American blacks becomes even more impressive:

MEDIAN SCHOOL YEARS COMPLETED, NEGROES, AGED 25-29

1940	7.0 years
1950	8.6 years
1960	10.8 years
1970	12.2 years

In 1940 the young black was typically an elementary-school dropout; a decade later he could be described only as an elementary-school graduate. Not until 1960 did the young American black typically reach even the level of high-school dropout, and not until 1970 did he typically become a high-school graduate—a bona-fide member of the educational middle class. To give a sense of the speed with which educational parity—in terms of years of school completed for young Americans*—came about, we may note that the gap between young whites and young blacks in 1950 was 3.5 years; twenty years later the gap was .4 of one year. The significance of these data cannot be discounted by arguments, however valid, that blacks are behind whites in reading levels, or by the view that education has little to do with economic success. In the real world, a young man cannot even get interviewed for a job as a bus driver unless he has a high-school diploma.

Finally, the leap into the educational middle class can be seen in college-enrollment statistics. In 1970, there were over half a million young blacks in college, slightly more than 9 per cent of the total. Over a short six-year period—from 1965 to 1971—the comparative figures are as follows:

PER CENT OF PERSONS, AGED 18-24, ENROLLED IN COLLEGE 1965-1971

	1965 %	*1971* %
Negro	10	18
White	26	27
"Gap"	16	9

Again, there is a gap and it is still large—but it has narrowed considerably.

IV

By most of the standards by which Americans measure middle-class status, then, blacks in the last decade have made mighty strides—both absolutely and relative to whites—and the time has come for this fact to be recognized. The image of the black in America must be changed, from an earlier one of an uneducated, unemployed, poverty-sticken slum-dweller, to that of an individual earning a living wage at a decent job, with children who stay in school and aspire to still-better wages and still-better jobs, living not in a slum (but still in a ghetto), in a decent if unelaborate dwelling, still economically behind his white counterpart but catching up.

But to say all this, while indeed correct, is *not* to say that the situation is uniformly good; that all blacks are in the middle class; that blacks as a whole have achieved parity with whites; that poverty is largely a thing of the past; or, last but not least, that there is cause for complacency in the realm of social and economic policy. None of these conclusions, in fact, is valid.

The high incidence of broken families among blacks—regarded by some observers as the key to the pathology of the black slums—has increased substantially in recent years. The figures chronicling the rise in the number of black female-headed families are stark:

PER CENT FEMALE-HEADED FAMILIES

	White %	*Black* %
1950	8.5	17.6
1960	8.9	22.4
1970	9.1	26.8
1971	9.4	28.9
1972	9.4	30.1

* For Americans of all ages there is still a disparity, reflecting earlier years of inequity. Median school years completed for all adult Negroes was 10.1 years in 1971 as compared with 12.2 years for all adult whites.

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Today, close to a third of black families are headed by females; twenty-odd years ago it was about a sixth. The white rate has changed only marginally in the same period.

The phrase "black female-headed families" is too often interchangeable with a more succinct term: "poor." In 1971, more than half (54 per cent) of such families were living below what the government calls the "low-income level"; only 17 per cent of male-headed families could be so designated. And the brutal fact is that from 1959 to 1971 the number of male-headed families in poverty decreased by more than half, while the number of female-headed families in poverty increased by a third. Thus, by 1971, almost six in ten black families in poverty were female-headed. As male-headed families exited from the poverty class, female-headed families entered it in growing numbers.

As the numbers and relative percentages of black female-headed families soared, so too did the numbers and rates of blacks on welfare.* In 1960, there were 3.1 million total welfare recipients in the United States. Of that number it is estimated that 41 per cent—roughly 1.3 million—were black, or about 7 per cent of the 18.8 million Negroes in America in 1960. As the decade progressed, the overall figures rose precipitously:

RECIPIENTS, AID TO DEPENDENT CHILDREN, 1960-1971

1960	3,073,000
1965	4,396,000
1967	5,309,000
1968	6,086,000
1969	7,313,000
1970	9,659,000
1971	10,651,000

Of the 10.6 million on welfare in 1971, 45 per cent were black—4.8 million. Of the total black population of 23 million, 21 per cent were on AFDC—up from 7 per cent only eleven years earlier.

It would be blinding ourselves to reality to deny the seriousness of these figures. The rise in female-headed black families living in poverty, and the concomitant increase in the number of blacks on welfare, is a deplorable situation from whatever angle it is viewed. It is deplorable for the millions of black children who grow up without a father in the house. It is deplorable for the stigma it attaches to those receiving welfare, and for the scars it inflicts on their spirit. And it is deplorable because of all the other circumstances that poverty entails: bad diet, bad clothing, bad housing, inferior medical care, etc. It is deplorable for black mothers torn between the desire to devote time and care to their children—especially children of pre-school age—and the desire to earn a better living than what the often inadequate welfare payments provide. These "welfare mothers" are often trapped in deteriorating neighborhoods that are havens for addicts, criminals, drunks, prostitutes, vandals, rapists, and muggers; existence—indeed mere survival—under such circumstances is perilous and grim.

And the situation is also deplorable because of what it does to our politicans and our politics—particularly liberal politicians and liberal politics. Middle-class voters—including many black middle-class voters—don't want to pay the bill for families they believe are "shiftless," for families they believe ought to be cared for by the (absent) man of the house. They especially resent paying when they believe that the standard of living they are providing for families on welfare has begun to approach their own, a standard they have toiled long and hard to reach. Politicians with liberal instincts feel compassion for the poor and the needy, but they also feel the hot breath of the voters on their necks. Caught between compassion and self-interest, liberal politicians also face torment from more conservative candidates who are perfectly willing, even anxious, to exploit the situation further.

YET the welfare figures alone, deplorable as they are, do not tell the full story. For the increase in the percentage of blacks on welfare has occurred during a time when the rate of blacks in poverty has sharply decreased. The meaning of this apparent paradox is simply that those blacks still in poverty are more likely than they once were to be receiving aid. The percentage of blacks in poverty has gone sharply down from 48 to 29 per cent in the years from 1959 to 1971. That is an enormous change. At the same time, as we have seen, the percentage of blacks on welfare has gone sharply up—by about three times, from 7 to 21 per cent: another enormous change. A black person in the poverty range, then, is far more likely to be receiving welfare now than in the early 60's, perhaps as much as five times as likely. And whatever may be said about the deficiencies of AFDC as a program, not to mention the panoply of other welfare services like food stamps and Medicaid, it seems an unequivocal gain that poor blacks are now getting welfare whereas at an earlier time they were getting nothing at all.

That the condition of the black poor is better than it was can be seen in the following table, which quantifies the upward movement of the poor toward the exit-line from poverty:

* "Welfare" as the term is generally used refers primarily to aid disbursed under the category "Aid to Families with Dependent Children" (AFDC)—and numbers for that program are the ones used here.

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MEDIAN INCOME DEFICIT FOR FAMILIES, BY RACE, BELOW THE LOW-INCOME LEVEL, 1959-1971 (IN CONSTANT 1971 DOLLARS)

Year	*White*	*Negro & Other Races*
1959	$1206	$1779
1971	$1068	$1254
Change '59-'71	—$138	—$525

In 1959, the median black family in poverty was $1,779 away from reaching the poverty line. Twelve years later the median poor black family was $525 closer to exiting from poverty, while the poor white family had advanced only $138 toward that goal (although in absolute terms it was still somewhat closer). Indeed, the same sort of pattern, although not quite as acute, was also apparent in the case of female-headed families:

MEDIAN INCOME DEFICIT FOR FEMALE-HEADED FAMILIES BELOW THE LOW-INCOME LEVEL, 1959-1971 (IN CONSTANT 1971 DOLLARS)

Year	*White*	*Black*
1959	$1508	$1848
1971	$1284	$1409
Change '59-'71	—$224	—$439

The black female-headed family in 1971 was worse off by $125 than a white female-headed family; in 1959 the gap between them was $340.

V

WHAT do all these figures on poverty and dependency tell us? First of all, there are fewer blacks in poverty. Secondly, those blacks in poverty are far more likely to be receiving help than was formerly the case. And finally, poor blacks are rising to levels closer to the line dividing poverty from non-poverty than before. Now, however, two additional factors must be considered which bear upon the current situation, and these are the changing demographic characteristics of the black poor and the problem of crime.

By and large over the last decade, people engaged in full-time work have left the poverty class. Thus the poor today are disproportionately the elderly and those in female-headed families; this holds true for whites and blacks alike. From 1959 to 1971 the percentage of all those in poverty who were over age 65 *increased* from 14 to 17 per cent, and the percentage of those families in poverty that were female-headed went up from 23 to 40 per cent.

It has been said that this change in the characteristics of the black poor amounts only to exchanging male poverty for female-poverty-plus-dependency, and that its net effect has thus been an increase, not a decrease, in dependency, as well as the creation of a vicious circle—what has been called the "welfare mess"—that drives more and more men away from home. But there is another side to the picture as well. As long as the poor are to remain with us—a notion that has outlived necessity but not, unfortunately, fact—it can surely be argued that it is better, all things considered, that their numbers be made up of those unable to work. Such a situation may be—is—a social tragedy of the first order; but an alternative situation—in which a husband-wife family, with the husband fully employed, was still on welfare—would be intolerable, both for the recipients and for the body politic as a whole.

Moreover, it is simply wrong to view every instance of female-poverty-plus-dependency as a net social loss. The "welfare mess" has also offered the woman who faces a drunk and brutal husband the option—however unpleasant—of telling him to pack up and get out. It may put her family on welfare, but it also dissolves a destructive relationship; this, after all, is an option that the upper classes have had, and used, for a long time.

As for the problem of crime, it hardly needs repeating, and scarcely needs to be documented, that crime rates—particularly violent crime rates—are high among blacks. Blacks comprise only about a ninth of the U.S. population, yet more blacks were arrested for crimes of violence in 1970 than whites—105,000 versus 96,000. This means, essentially, that the rate of violent crimes among blacks is about ten times the rate among whites. Furthermore, the victims of crime are also disproportionately black. In 1965, blacks were two-and-a-half times more likely than whites to be the victims of rape, robbery, or aggravated assault. In 1970 more blacks than whites were murdered: 7,490 blacks compared with 5,999 whites.

But as with the issue of dependency, so with the issue of crime. The negative side is bleak—bleaker in this instance than in years past, bleak to the point of horror and social morbidity. Yet it is important to note that while the rates of violent crime among blacks have soared, they have not done so equally throughout the black community. As blacks make economic progress into the middle class they tend to leave their old inner-city slum neighborhoods for better, safer environments. The old neighborhoods, like Hough and Watts, have often actually lost population in recent years. As the upwardly mobile leave the slum, its character undergoes an important change. It used to be a generally unsafe and unpleasant neighborhood, but one with a sizable quotient of hard-working, law-abiding families that provided some sort of social leavening and stability. Now it has become a place made up disproportionately of the dependent poor—the female-headed families and the elderly—and social derelicts: winos, addicts, hustlers, pimps, prostitutes, criminals, and bums. And the crime rates are high beyond imagining.

Yet one of the most significant aspects of the inner-city slum nieghborhoods may turn out to

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be not the people who live there, but the people who live there no longer, the increasing numbers of middle-class blacks who now live in neighborhoods where crime—while still an enormous problem—is one that can be borne. It would be barbaric to contend that the near-safety of the black middle class, even if it is now a slim majority, somehow justifies the continued fear and degradation of those remaining in the slum. But it would be merely demagogic to pretend that the progress of any group of people can be accomplished all at once and without class fragmentation. The history of group progress in America tells us otherwise—as the present condition of the poor Irish, the poor Jews, and the poor Wasps testifies. The point we make is a simple, if harsh, one: the fact that some blacks have been "left behind" does not in itself negate the fact of massive black success.

VI

Judging progress is of necessity a cold and comparative discipline. We believe, however, that on the basis of the statistics we have examined, it is fair to say that for American blacks *generally* in the 1960's a huge amount of progress was made—although there is still a substantial and necessary distance to traverse before some rough level of parity is reached. Moreover, those three in ten blacks who remain trapped in poverty also made statistical economic progress in these years, although on balance this progress may with justice be considered nullified by the stunning rise of violence in the worst areas of our nation.

Now, is all this better than what it replaced? The answer is an uncompromising "yes." In a society that prides itself on being middle class, blacks are now moving into the middle class in unprecedented numbers. In a society that scorns the high-school drop-out and offers work to the high-school graduate, blacks are now finishing high school and significant numbers are going on to college. In a culture that has a clear idea of what is a good job and what is not, blacks are now moving into good jobs. There can be little doubt that all these socioeconomic developments are better than what they replaced.

But what of the future? Two scenarios seem plausible to us; a third—an unpleasant one—seems unlikely.

The first scenario envisages continued progress for American blacks, not only absolutely as the rest of the nation progresses, but 1960's-style, in the form of a continued march toward statistical parity with whites. At least two good sets of reasons can be adduced to confirm the likelihood of this taking place. There are, first, the structural reasons. Black income levels are lowest in the South, yet rising relatively fastest there (up 113 per cent from 1960 to 1970, versus rates of from 70 to 80 per cent in other regions). A majority of all blacks still live in the South (compared with 31 per cent of all Americans), yet out-migration has been substantial and seems to be continuing. Blacks outside the South make more money than blacks in the South. There is no basis for supposing that any of these trends will change: blacks will continue to live disproportionately in the South where black earnings are climbing fastest, and they will continue to leave the South, thus getting an automatic boost toward income parity. From a broad statistical point of view, then, the "Southern" situation argues favorably both for blacks in the South and for blacks leaving it.

Another structural consideration is the status of young blacks. As noted earlier, the sharpest relative gains in the last decade were made by black families under 35. If this pattern continues —and there is no reason to believe it will not—it will of its own weight continue to move the total black-white numbers closer to parity. Elderly blacks will leave the labor force and ultimately die, and will be replaced by the new cohorts of young blacks (who happen to be a disproportionately large group today). These new young black families will enter at the present close-to-parity rates now held by young black families as a whole. Further, it seems likely that the now-young but soon-to-be-middle-aged blacks will continue to retain some, most, or all of their present relatively high standing as they reach their late thirties and early forties. This seems especially plausible if one assumes that young black families have made income progress in large measure because of their greater educational attainments and because they hold better jobs than they used to; the same jobs and the same educational background will continue to serve them in good stead as they move into middle age. A black who enters the civil service, or a labor union, at age 25—because he had suitable education or apprentice training—will not only not lose ground as he ages, but will gain all the normal advantages of seniority. What this means, in effect, is that the progress that is now discernible is due not to the sheer youth of young blacks, but to the fact that something happened in America that opened up paths of mobility for young blacks. As the proportion of those able to take advantage of this new situation becomes an ever-greater share of the total black population, the black-white statistics will look better and better as the years go on.

Beyond the structural reasons for assuring continued progress are the political and psychic ones. Something did indeed happen in the 1960's: the logjam broke—politically, legally, socially, economically, even spiritually—and there is no going back. Not Richard Nixon, not Barry Goldwater, not even Strom Thurmond or James Eastland wants to return to Little Rock, to

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Birmingham, to Selma. The logjam having broken, according to the first scenario, things will never be the same; continued progress is inevitable.

In the second—less optimistic—scenario of the future, the broad structural factors just mentioned are taken into account, the broad political-cultural factors are minimized, and two other factors are introduced.

First, insofar as it can be measured sketchily over a short period of time, progress in the Nixon years of 1969, 1970, and 1971 was less dramatic than in the Kennedy-Johnson years. True, the slowdown was not aimed at blacks; there was a national economic recession, and if the sinking rate of blacks in poverty stopped sinking, so, roughly, did the rate for whites. The rates of black families earning $10,000 a year or more in fact continued to climb, although more slowly than earlier. Black income viewed as a fraction of white income seemed to reach a plateau. Unemployment rates climbed for both blacks and whites—somewhat more so for whites. On some fronts progress continued strong—very strong—despite the recession: high-school drop-out rates for black males fell markedly from 1970 to 1971 (for 18-year-olds the rate fell from 30 per cent to 23 per cent; for 19-year-olds from 44 to 29 per cent).

The record of the first three Nixon years cannot be called much better than mixed. The key question, of course, is whether these three years signal a general and continuing slowdown or merely a partial and temporary one. The answer will have to wait until the economy heats up again, but according to the second scenario the 1970's will begin to bear a structural resemblance to the economic plateau of the 1950's, rather than to the sharp ascent of the 1960's.

Aside from the recent figures, as the second scenario would have it, there is further reason to be concerned about the new Nixon budget for fiscal 1974. That budget has been described as the death knell of the Great Society, and while the description is no doubt overly dramatic, it is clear that if the President has his way many of the Great Society programs will be cut back or cut out. If these programs were indeed what was responsible for the great progress made by blacks in the 1960's, it follows that progress will decrease as the programs are eliminated or starved. Doing away with the programs, in effect, will presumably do away with some if not all of the relative gains that are likely to accrue from structural forces alone.

No one really knows how much good (or bad, for that matter) was accomplished by the Great Society programs of the 60's, and debate over the question is likely to go on indefinitely. Our own view—which owes something to political considerations, something to statistical ones—is that the programs accomplished a good deal; their sharp curtailment would probably be sufficient to prevent the future of steady progress envisaged in the first scenario, yet probably not sufficient to insure the future of total stasis envisaged in the second. This view, and its political implications, will be spelled out in detail in a moment.

The third and final scenario of the future course of events asserts confidently that the Great Society programs were in fact so important that their partial demise will not only eliminate the projected structural gains, but insure an absolute retrogression. Things for blacks will get relatively worse in the 70's according to this scenario.

In our judgment this is an improbable prognosis. President Nixon neither wants to, nor could, undo all the progress of the 60's. No one, for instance, has proposed repealing the Voting Rights Act, which wields enormous political clout. No one has proposed repealing the Public Accommodations Law. Nor the new minimum wages. Nor Medicaid. Nor aid to higher education. In addition, while no one can accurately quantify the impact of the New Frontier and Great Society, we believe it a mistaken analysis that the programs alone were responsible for the progress of the 60's. A key anti-poverty remedy in the past, and one likely to remain so in the future, is a steadily strong economy. The Great Society programs were a central ingredient of progress, but not so central that repeal of some of them now would actually reverse the tide.

VII

IT HAS been our contention, and one which we have attempted to document, that enormous progress has been made by American blacks in the past decade, so much so that a thin majority of American blacks now belong to the middle class. But we noted early in this essay that a blanket of silence seems to envelop the liberal community on this point, so that the economic and social advances made by blacks, far from being trumpeted or even acknowledged, are simply ignored when they are not actually denied. In the face of all the evidence to the contrary, not a few liberal spokesmen and civil-rights activists have claimed that blacks are in fact worse off now than they were ten years ago.

In December of last year the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin was host to a Civil Rights Symposium on the occasion of the opening of the monumental collection of papers and documents concerned with civil rights during the LBJ era. It was a major event at an institution that had already become known as a first-rate center of scholarship, and it was attended by many of the great and the near-great, the famous and the near-famous, of the civil-rights movement. Among those on hand were Roy Wilkins, Earl Warren, Vernon Jordan, Burke Marshall, Julian Bond, Richard Hatcher, Barbara Jordan,

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Yvonne Braithwaite Burke, plus a host of panelists. Each had his moment before the microphones, each participated in this most recent collective attempt to evaluate the past, present, and future of the black man's struggle for equality in our time.

Two general themes emerged as the conference went on. The first was a celebration of Lyndon Johnson (a theme which, since his subsequent death, has been sounded as well by those who scant years before had proclaimed him a "honky" and a murderer of children). Homage was paid to Mr. Johnson for the Civil Rights Acts of 1958 and 1960, passed when he was Senate majority leader, for the Voting Rights Act of 1964, for the Public Accommodations Act of 1965, and for the Housing Act of 1968. All this legislation, it was correctly noted, broke the back of legalized discrimination in America. For the first time blacks could vote everywhere in the nation, could eat at a lunch counter, could legally buy a house in any neighborhood. For this great formal progress, LBJ and the civil-rights movement were to be awarded accolades.

Yet curiously the talk was exclusively of new *rights* gained by blacks in this period, not of any achievements made by them as a consequence.

The second theme of the conference was one of condemnation, and its object was the new President, Richard Nixon. Even before the new budget had been announced, it seemed clear to most of the participants at this conference that President Nixon's aim was to roll back progress, undo economic gains, and reduce blacks once again to their former status of servitude and poverty—all in the name of what the participants viewed as his infamous "Southern Strategy."

In a departure from the general chorus of voices Senator Hubert Humphrey addressed himself to new Congressional strategies, stressing that the next round of liberal legislation must be aimed at helping not just the poor or the black, but all Americans, including those, black and white, in the middle class. And the late former President Johnson himself, in his last public address, uttered a stirring plea for reconciliation and a new commitment to equality for all.

But, astonishingly enough, no one—*no one*—thought it necessary, wise, or advisable to take as a theme the remarkable progress—economic, educational, occupational, social—made by blacks over the last decade.* Julian Bond, in noting the current statistical condition of blacks in America, said, incredibly:

> . . . We are no longer slaves. Secondly, we can sit at lunch counters, sit downstairs at movie theaters, ride in the front of buses, register, vote, work, and go to school where we once could not. But in a great many ways, we are constantly discovering that things have either not changed at all, or have become much worse. A quick look at all of the facts and figures that measure how well, or how poorly, a people are doing—the kinds of statistics that measure infant mortality, unemployment, median family income, life expectancy—demonstrates clearly that the average black American, while better off in comparison than his father was, is actually worse off when his statistics are measured against similar ones for white people. It is as though black Americans are climbing a molasses mountain in showshoes, while the rest of the country rides a rather leisurely ski-lift to the top. It is these depressing figures, and the accompanying pathology which results from them, that causes so much discontent and depression in black communities today. The realization is that separately over the years the diverse strategies of Booker T. Washington and Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey and Martin Luther King and Malcolm X have not appreciably improved the material lot of the masses of black folk.

WHY have the data of black advancement been kept secret by those who presumably have an interest in making them known? After all, the black man-in-the-street is perfectly aware of the gains that have been made. A Potomac Associates/Gallup Poll taken in 1972, for instance, revealed that whereas whites on the whole said life in America had gotten worse in recent years, blacks said things were getting better (they were the only group of 31 sub-categories who thought so). The answer is of course that civil-rights leaders do know what has happened, and even acknowledge it in private; but they have elected as a matter of policy to mute any public acknowledgment or celebration of black accomplishments in order to maintain moral and political pressure on the administration and on public opinion.

This strategy, we submit, is a mistaken one, counterproductive of its goal; the only people who have been kept under pressure by it are liberals themselves. As has been the case with many aspects of the liberal agenda in the last half-century, civil-rights leaders who refuse to claim credit for the successes they have earned only lend themselves to the purposes of those who declare the bankruptcy of liberalism altogether as a political strategy.

Here is the dilemma in which liberals find themselves. Forty years have passed since they became the driving force of American politics, frequently occupying the White House, always influential in the Congress. In this period of time a remarkable body of legislation has been placed on the statute books, as a result of which great economic and social progress has been made in the country at large, from which all Americans have

* Less than two months later the annual Civil Rights Leadership Conference dinner was held in Washington, and once again no public mention was made of black achievements—other than legal—over the decade.

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benefited. And this progress liberals now deny, claiming that the programs for which they fought and lobbied have not worked (but at the same time denouncing Richard Nixon when *he* says they haven't worked).

In short, the liberal battle-cry has become, "We have failed; let us continue!"

A classic illustration of this tendency was provided by Senator Edmund Muskie in a speech delivered at the Liberal party dinner in New York in October 1971:

> We meet tonight in a time of failure of American liberalism. You can see the failure everywhere in this city and across the country. For too long, the sound of liberal alarms has been answered by little more than the echo of our own voices. . . . The blunt truth is that liberals have achieved virtually no fundamental change in our society since the end of the New Deal. We have made strong efforts, some of them even inspiring. We have made good speeches, some of them even great. And we have even made some advances . . . too many of them half-measures. So in 1971, we continue to live with institutions . . . that serve the few who are comfortable at the expense of the many who truly are in need. How have we gained so little after so long a time and so much work? It is easy to blame others. But the fault is not primarily in others . . . it is in ourselves. Too often, we have assumed that we would win because we should win. Too often, we have equated a hard fight for progress with the hard fact of progress.

Now let us suppose that, instead of the institutionalized gloom pervading liberal thought today, a different analysis—an *accurate* analysis—were substituted, and a different rhetoric adopted to conform to it. Of what would it consist? It would begin, first of all, in the recognition that in 1960 and in 1964, the nation elected Presidents who were pledged to get America moving again, to give a better deal to the poor and the black, to break a decades-old legal, political, and social logjam. Thanks to these Presidents, thanks to a liberal impulse in the Congress in the mid-1960's, thanks to the tireless efforts of liberals all over America, the legislation was passed to fulfill that pledge: manpower programs, poverty programs, and a stunning array of health, education, and legal services. Now, more than a decade later, we can look back and see—results. The census and the other statistical indices of our time show success in many crucial areas; in particular, a better deal has been given to the poor and the black to the point where many of them are now in the middle class, just as the Presidential pledges and the legislation promised. The confirming data have been presented above. To be sure, we cannot say absolutely that the legislation was *totally* responsible for the progress made, but we can say absolutely that it was crucial. Liberalism worked.

Normally, given a situation such as the one we have described, the political burden of proof would be on him who wished to deny it, in this case a Republican President with an analysis and a strategy of his own to promote. He would be the one forced to show that life in America has deteriorated, or at least that liberal programs had failed. Instead—at a moment when history and data show victory for their ideas—liberals loudly compete with each other to do his work. Instead of proclaiming success, liberals can only assert that America is a failure, that things are as bad as ever and maybe worse. And President Nixon smiles in agreement.

The problem is more than just political in the narrow, partisan sense. At issue finally is the possibility of achieving a rational and peaceful resolution of the enduring racial problems of this country. By refusing to acknowledge the facts of success, liberals give further currency to the old stereotypes of black poverty—slums, rat-infested dwellings, a self-perpetuating welfare culture—and thereby help to confer legitimacy on the policies of those who would shirk the hard task of social and economic integration. It simply makes no sense to demand of white middle-class Americans that they welcome into their hearts, let alone into their neighborhoods, schools, or places of work, such stereotyped examples of human misery and degradation as liberals proclaim the majority of American blacks to be. It makes eminent sense, on the other hand, to demand of white middle-class Americans that they extend a fair and equal chance to those who have, like them, earned their way into the middle class, as well as to all those millions who stand ready to do so once given the chance. Integration, still the only realistic solution to the race problem, will proceed only as economic class gaps narrow, and are publicly acknowledged to be narrowing. Trumpeting failure, the best deal liberals are likely to get, from this or any other administration, is one that amounts to standpatism. Acknowledging those successes that have in fact been achieved, demanding the means and the money for the completion of the job, liberals might legitimately hope for action, and an extension of their political writ.

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The "Times" Op-Ed Page: Both Ends Against the Middle

Carl Gershman

IN THE past two-and-a-half years, the Op-Ed page of the New York *Times* —so-called because it appears opposite the editorial page—has become a powerful presence in American culture. Like the *Times* itself, it is an institution of national rather than merely local interest and significance, and also like the *Times* itself, it has achieved this position at least partly as a result of the sheer quantity and range of the material it has published. In addition to pieces by the *Times*'s regular columnists,* the Op-Ed page in its first thirty months of publication carried well over two-thousand articles covering a very broad variety of subjects. Some of these articles were of a largely non-political nature. One person preferred old-fashioned kitchens to the modern variety, another thought that gourmet eating was a good antidote to joylessness, a third happily reflected on her decision to move to the country. But the great majority of Op-Ed-page pieces in this period were devoted to political and social expression by writers who had "no institutional connection with the *Times* and whose views"—just as the statement of September 21, 1970 announcing the inauguration of the new page promised they would be—were often "completely divergent" from the paper's editorial line. When we examine the way several major questions were treated on the Op-Ed page in its first two-and-a-half years of publication, however, we find that while it did fulfill its promise to air "the widest possible variety of opinions," it did not in general fulfill its promise to contribute to a "deeper public understanding of difficult issues."

THE first major issue treated on the Op-Ed page was the issue of student protest, and the main question posed for discussion was whether it was possible for "youth" to work for change within the system. A central focus of this discussion was a letter from a professor urging students to get involved in electoral action and to assist the farmworkers and other worthy causes. To this, three editors of campus newspapers responded. Of the three, the most "moderate" observed that although "our society is disintegrating before our eyes" and "all the channels to change in America are plugged," he himself could not engage in violence as it was "antithetical to both my upbringing and education." The second editor was bolder and more dramatic:

> We are in the streets because we are attacking our own mother country—attacking it at one of its wells of lifeblood: the great resource that is the university. . . . The buildings we burn are not our own. Nor are they the American people's, even though the American people pay for them. They belong to the Pentagon, to the police, to the government. . . .
>
> Our generation is confused and uptight. This year will be the most difficult one we have had to face yet. We may see our friends die before it is over. Yet we also know that if we dare to struggle, we also dare to win.

The third editor found electoral action "farcical, dishonest, manipulative, and virtually lacking in real political content," and he urged the following more honest and politically substantial course:

> Mass disruption and low-level property destruction have proven effective organizing tools. We have only begun to feel our way toward building a popular front for social change.

Virtually the only indication given that there might be other ideas circulating in that particular age group was a piece by a "non-conformist" who wrote that "I marched with Martin Luther King at Selma, and voted for Barry Goldwater for President. My favorite contemporary writers are Norman Mailer and William F. Buckley, Jr. I am a registered Republican, a longhair, a capitalist, a grass smoker, a Vietnam hawk, a rock freak." But no pieces appeared by young people critical of these apocalyptic attitudes toward the country and its political institutions, or who might have dissented from the idea that the country was falling apart and that the democratic process was a farce—although, of course, many such young people existed at the time even in the colleges.

So too with adult attitudes toward American

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* These are not properly considered a part of the Op-Ed page and will not be discussed here.

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youth. In article after article young people were pictured by their elders as a separate and distinct category of the population, nearly monolithic in social and political character, highly idealistic, and radically alienated from an unjust, even wicked, American society.

Louis Untermeyer, refusing to be resigned "to the crippling divisiveness, the widespread injustices and accumulating cruelties in my country," found himself "instinctively, if incongruously, allied with the protesting young" and "stirred by their enthusiasm, their experiments." Senator Ernest F. Hollings felt that youth was "more concerned about the future of this country and what it stands for than my generation." Reverend Theodore Hesburgh regarded campus unrest as the result of the "moral concern" of students about "war, violence, racism, poverty, pollution, human degradation on a large scale." M. L. Rosenthal thought "students would be a dull lot indeed if they stood mute" in the face of "the stale ways and old injustices." Terry Sanford compared the current student generation with our Founding Fathers, while Leonard Bernstein called it "the best generation in history."

As against this, a Mississippi doctor told his son going away to college at Tulane that if he engaged in protest and was shot, "Mama and I will still back the U.S. . . . The National Guard can shove in a couple of clips and clean Tulane. I think they ought to when students disturb the peace and destroy property." And excerpts from a report of the Santa Barbara Citizens Commission on Civil Disorders blamed the unrest on the intolerance of the "straight people" who felt that the "counter-culture" youth should either conform or leave town.

There were some pieces that departed from the basic pattern. Jerzy Kosinski wrote that college youth lacked individuality, Andrew Greeley insisted that religion was still alive on campus, a retired Yale professor proposed an aristocratic university with a smaller, more select student body, and Jeffrey St. John blamed the intellectuals for campus unrest. But there were no articles emphasizing the moral and political diversity of the young or challenging the other assumptions on which the entire discussion of student protest was being conducted at this point. It was many months before two articles appeared, both written by White House aide Stephen Hess, pointing to the growing body of evidence that youth tended in overwhelming numbers to share in the political ideas of their parents and of the social class from which they came. In the original discussion of youth no such views appeared. It was always "Agnew vs. Spock," as one Op-Ed feature of the early period was called, and when Sidney Hook managed to squeeze his way into the debate with an even-handed condemnation of student terrorists and their "liberal" faculty apologists alike, the accompanying note indicated that Hook's "views on campus unrest have been widely circulated by the White House."

During the second month of its history the focus of the Op-Ed page shifted from student protest to the so-called counter-culture. The discussion was launched with two articles by Charles Reich summarizing his ideas about Consciousness III and "the greening of America." Many responses followed, including pieces by John Kenneth Galbraith, George F. Kennan, Herbert Marcuse, Tom Hayden, and the editors of the Yale and Harvard newspapers. Two subsequent articles by Reich concluded the episode.

As in the treatment of the youth protest, the discussion proceeded in the context of certain basic assumptions that were themselves highly questionable but that were never adequately questioned. There was a later piece by Peter and Brigitte Berger on "the bluing of America"—i.e., the possible takeover of positions of power by working-class youth following the abdication of such positions by "greened" affluent youth—but nothing was printed asking whether a new consciousness had indeed emerged among youth, nor did anyone challenge Reich's indictment of American society as a closed totalitarian system. Despite the fact that the contributors to this discussion were people with many different political perspectives, the only point debated on the Op-Ed page was whether the new consciousness contained the remedy for the manifold injustices and inadequacies of American life. (Galbraith and Kennan found it insufficient, while Marcuse and Hayden saw it as a distraction from more radical solutions.)

Yet so shallow were Reich's ideas about "youth" that only a few months later even the editor of the *New Yorker* (which had serialized Reich's book) could say: "That all seems so long ago. I don't mean only in time, the months that have passed. The whole mood is so remote now. It was a last whimper. . . ." The same might be said about student protest in the 60's. That the Youth Candidate in 1972 lost the youth vote to Richard Nixon was a development which could only have been incomprehensible to any reader of the Op-Ed page who took its picture of the world seriously. For instead of providing a critical perspective on the phenomena of student protest and the youth culture, and thereby "deepening public understanding of difficult issues," the Op-Ed page indulged a superficial faddism and a fashionable apocalypticism and thus helped distort the public understanding of what was happening in America and why.

THE Op-Ed page dealt in much the same way with the race issue. The tone was set early in the page's history in a letter to Angela Davis from George Jackson in which

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Jackson wrote: "I don't believe in mercy or forgiveness or restraint. . . . No one will profit from my immolation. When that day comes they'll have to bury ten thousand of their own with full military honor. They'll have earned it." In "An Open Letter to the Ethnics," John A. Williams urged them to ally with the black revolt because "They're killing your children, too." Roger Wilkins vowed to fight hard "against the spirit of repression and intimidation" in America, while a black priest labeled the Catholic Church "a white racist institution." A piece entitled "For a Black Political Agenda," written shortly after the 1970 elections by two associates of an Atlanta research organization, Vincent Harding and William Strickland, defined black political objectives:

> During the recent elections, both parties abandoned black people and our issues: the insane, wasteful, imperialistic war; the arrogant national support of anti-liberation forces across the Third World; the persecution and assassination of our young people; the deterioration and poisoning of the urban centers; economic depression in black America; educational genocide practiced against inner city children; the uses of token "desegregation" in the South to destroy real black control of black public education—none of these was seriously addressed by white politicians.

In the weeks and months that followed, discussion of the race issue continued to be dominated by such strident rhetoric, most of it coming from black revolutionists and separatists like Angela Davis, Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Bobby Seale, and many lesser known figures with similar points of view. Fred Hampton, in a speech printed after his death at the hands of the Chicago police, said that he wanted "to die for the people" in "the international proletarian revolutionary struggle." Another Black Panther, Richard Moore, took it on himself to write in "the organ of the ruling class, to present the necessary information" that would help "the masses of misinformed People . . . differentiate between the revisionist clique of West Coast pimps headed by Huey P. Newton, and those who have cast their Fate in the making of the American Revolution."

At the same time, black leaders like Roy Wilkins and Bayard Rustin, who continued to press for integration and to oppose the resort to violence, were virtually ignored by the Op-Ed page. The only article by Wilkins, head of the largest black organization in the country, was a eulogy for Adam Clayton Powell, and it appeared alongside another tribute by a student militant. A piece by Bayard Rustin on school decentralization was submitted and rejected. Whitney Young discussed ghetto investment and Dr. Kenneth Clark wrote in favor of busing, but neither they nor any other integrationists were ever given space to criticize the militant line. When, finally, the militants were criticized, the attack came from a supermilitant who charged that the "Afro-American community, once considered a hot-bed of radicalism, was rapidly becoming a new conservative force in American politics," conservative meaning "patriotic (anti-revolutionary)." Among those accused of having "turned Right" were the Black Panthers and Stokely Carmichael. The mainstream civil-rights organizations were not even mentioned, presumably on the ground that they had "turned Right" a long time before.

Thus, to match the stereotype of youth as radical, alienated, and idealistic, a stereotype of blacks as angry racial militants prone to violence emerged from the Op-Ed page. To be sure, a series of pieces appeared by Mary E. Mebane (Liza), a black teacher from South Carolina—about her youth in rural Durham County, her teaching experiences, the black church—which conflicted with the stereotype. But apart from this distinctly regional exception, there was scarcely a hint of the fact that most blacks rejected the militant line and those who were urging it upon them, that far from being separatists most continued to believe in integration, and that far from thinking that "both parties abandoned black people and our issues," growing numbers were registering and voting (for the Democrats).

As with politics, so with morality. Here the discussion was dominated by the idea that blacks, being the victims of injustice, are not morally responsible for what they do. "I was born innocent and trusting," George Jackson wrote. "They created this situation. All that flows from it is their responsibility." The doctrine of collective black innocence was stated with equal forthrightness by Alfred Hassan, a paroled convict, in a piece called "You Gonna Send Me to the Pen":

> Don't be telling me what is right. You talk that right jive, but where was you when my old man and the neighbors was teaching me how to steal and shoot dope? . . . Where was you when the World was calling me a dirty nigger and a greasy Mexican and a poor white peckawood? Where was you when the cops was whipping me upside my head just because my skin was dark? Where was you when I was losing respect for your law and your order? Where was you when Wrong was my only salvation? . . .
>
> Yeah, I got a chip on my shoulder. But it didn't get up there by itself. And it's gonna stay up there until you eliminate the funky conditions that breed cats like me. . . .

Such sentiments were crystallized by Attica and the death of George Jackson, and the Op-Ed page provided an unusual amount of space for their expression. No fewer than nineteen articles were

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printed on the Attica incident alone. Six were by regular columnists Tom Wicker and Anthony Lewis, and of the other thirteen, only one took issue with the idea that the "system" was exclusively responsible for the violence; it was written by Spiro T. Agnew. Mayor Kenneth Gibson of Newark, describing Attica as "one of the most callous and blatantly repressive acts ever carried out by a supposedly civilized society on its own people," found it symptomatic of the "systematic violence" pervading American society. The president of the American Sociological Association declared this a "sick society" which, "like our prison system, pursues policies that generate more violence." To Ramsey Clark, Attica showed "again America's reliance on violence as a problem-solver."

The San Quentin prison break in which George Jackson was killed was treated in much the same way (seven pieces). In this case Ronald Reagan rather than Spiro Agnew represented the voice of opposition, asserting that "In California we will not compromise with rioting prisoners." One piece by an ex-convict criticized the tendency to make "myths" out of prisoners like Jackson, but the other five (two by Wicker and three by outside contributors) represented Jackson as a blameless victim of society. Thus, in "My Brother, George," Roger Wilkins argued that even if Jackson had killed several people before being killed himself, he could not be held responsible:

> Death of prisoner and keeper alike are the natural consequences of state-sponsored savagery. If some men kill to prevent the theft of the goods of their store or their family jewels, might others not also kill to prevent the theft of their lives and their spirits?

This idea, so popular within the liberal community in the last few years, and so insulting to all those blacks who believe that to see themselves or other blacks as less than morally responsible for the actions they commit would be to see themselves as less than fully human, encountered opposition on the Op-Ed page only from Agnew and Reagan.

UNDERLYING the specific issues of youth and race was the general issue of America itself, and a very large number of articles on the Op-Ed page during its first thirty months were naturally addressed either directly or indirectly to the character of American society.

As portrayed on the Op-Ed page in the period under consideration, America was a divided nation, with the line drawn between a majority (as it would have appeared to a reader of the Op-Ed page) which saw the country as sterile, cruel, violent, racist, sexist, power-crazed, and militarist, and a minority which chauvinistically disagreed with this assessment. On a few occasions a social democrat or a dissident liberal offered an alternative point of view. Thus Daniel P. Moynihan observed that "nihilism has been taking root in upper-class culture in the United States." Alexander M. Bickel, criticizing John Gardner's remark that our political parties "are virtually useless as instruments of the popular will," wrote that Gardner "sees fit in a manner increasingly fashionable to speak in tones of the apocalypse, and to heap virtually unqualified condemnation on society as now organized and run." And Robert Bendiner, faulting Edmund Muskie for having abandoned his moderate posture in the pursuit of the White House, noted that extremism had recently "come into its own as an upper-middle-class attitude, highly popular at suburban dinner parties, occasionally lauded at church breakfasts as 'prophetic witness,' and found thoroughly 'understandable' in the columns of respectable journals." But such voices were rare indeed, and they were muted by the shrill cries of condemnation of America that took up so much space on the Op-Ed page.

Thus, according to Marshall McLuhan, the norm in America was "total alienation of men from their fellows." Cynthia Buchanan confessed that "Packaging, performance, image have made us, as individuals, false. Falseness has made us lonely." Joseph Rhodes, Jr., a member of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, opined that "Americans are hungry, bored, sick, frustrated, polluted, and discarded." From Herbert Marcuse we learned that "the real people" in America were "men and women madly in love with death, violence, and destruction," and a young graduate student in history wrote that murder had become "the most American of acts." Rollo May offered the thought that America was "engaged in a vast repression of the fact of death," while a father whose son shot a water pistol at the breakfast table gravely concluded that guns and killing were "built into our society." For Philip Berrigan, the problem was that "Morally speaking, Americans are bleeding to death."

Our penal system, according to that apostle of democratic values, Angela Davis, was a form of "unmitigated totalitarianism." Jonathan Kozol complained that our school system was "not working" because "School cannot at once both socialize to the values of an oppressor and toil for the liberation and the potency of the oppressed." Douglas Dowd made a similar argument about the universities, which were under "deserved attack" by students because they served "the causes of business, of war, of power, of status." A husband-and-wife team who traveled 20,000 miles around America reported finding only a few small towns that could be deemed "habitable," and even those suffered from drug abuse and xenophobia. A "distinguished Professor of Urban Affairs" feared that "American totalitarianism," in the form of a "pluralistic 'friendly fascism,'" could overtake us "slowly as a cancerous growth within and around

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the White House, the Pentagon, and the broader political establishment." Shirley MacLaine declared that "Right now the social soul of America is so sick that even the overthrow of a political regime may be insufficient." A young draft resister assured us that we had "an economic system based on cancerous growth, resolute greed, and unmitigated corruption."

In America, a Cornell student told us, "a white elite has colonized, enslaved, and practiced genocide to maintain their power." But relations between the sexes were no better than those between the races, and for much the same reason. Robin Morgan, fearing the *Times*'s tactic of "co-optation" in opening its pages to her, chose to write anyway in order to communicate with her sisters about "the growing repression . . . by which white male imperialism" intended to keep women and other oppressed people "from a righteous rebellion." Her colleague, Gloria Steinem, asserted that the United States had become "the most destructive of the world's great nations" because "the masculine mystique" drove our leaders to be "Number One." Yoko Ono added that "feminine direction" was needed since "In the last two thousand years, men have repeatedly shown us failure in their method of running the world." And another contributor charged America with "sexocide" in permitting women to be viewed as "*just* a housewife, *only* a mother."

IN THE world of the Op-Ed page, Jews too shared in this general estimate of America. From the Right Meir Kahane urged Jews to "evacuate" before it was too late, but other Jews preferred to remain in Babylon as prophets from the Left. Arthur Waskow reported that young Jews who rejected what they called "'Amerikan' society, and would say it with images of Germany and genocide before their eyes," were trying to tell us that "either Isaiah's Days of Peace and Justice will be achieved on earth in the next generation, or the earth itself will be consumed by fire and poison. If that is indeed the choice, who could more joyfully work for Isaiah's vision than Isaiah's people in America?" A young rabbi noted that Jeremiah's "message of doom was considered subversive and dangerous," but that he had been proven right in the end. He added:

> Moses's warnings and the subsequent plagues have their parallels in our own time. The power failures are darknesses that cover the face of our land. The odor coming from the Hudson and the death of fish in our national waters remind us of the Nile. The rats and roaches in our city, even on Park Avenue, are certainly a plague of vermin. Our unbelievable infant mortality rate in this, the most affluent country on the face of the earth, is to be taken as seriously as the death of the Egyptian first-born.

On the Op-Ed page the "other America" was mainly represented by heroes of the extreme Right. J. Edgar Hoover feared that young people were being subverted by the Communists and, in another instance, called upon the judiciary to "deal promptly and decisively with vituperative outbursts and disruptive tactics in court." H. L. Hunt also suspected the Communist enemies within who "envy the success and the greatness of our individual initiative, personal enterprise, and profit-motive system and want to destroy all this." A column on capital punishment by an official of the New York Conservative party was entitled "They Must Surely Die," and Reverend Charles E. Coughlin returned from a long oblivion to urge us to "hasten now to dissolve wastage, racism, forced integration, youth pollution, the supremacy of minorities, and compromises with evil."

It was this unshaded view of America which colored the discussion of Vietnam on the Op-Ed page. The tenor of the articles critical of American policy was entirely in keeping with Anthony Lewis's widely quoted statement that "The United States is the most dangerous and destructive power in the world," while the only alternative to this general stance seemed to derive from the Right.

"We are torturers," Kurt Vonnegut wrote, "and we once hoped to win in Indochina and anywhere because we had the most expensive torture instruments yet devised." "Obviously," according to Kennett Love, "the main business of the most powerful nation in history is death and violence." Said Harold Taylor: "We wiped out the Indians and are now wiping out the Vietnamese simply because it suits our interests." The Reverend Francis B. Sayre wrote that "Calley is all of us. He is every single citizen in our graceless land," and the founder of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War agreed that "every last one of us is guilty, along with Calley, of committing war crimes." Rennie Davis charged that in Vietnam America had committed "the greatest atrocity of the 20th century." Other writers, like Davis himself, expressed solidarity with North Vietnam and the Vietcong. Fred Gardner approved of the practice of "fragging" (i.e., blowing up) officers who ordered troops into the field, and noted that "blatant racists are dealt with similarly." Marya Mannes wrote with some pride that she and "thousands of other Americans" were "traitors" in the sense that they wanted North Vietnam to win. Grace Paley called each American POW a "killer" and noted that each "may have accomplished half a dozen My Lais in any evening."

In line with the usual pattern of the Op-Ed page, the main alternative to this extreme position seemed to be the military or the Right. The Secretary of the Air Force and a retired Air Force general defended Nixon's bombing policy; General Westmoreland defended the reputation of the Army; retired Brigadier General S.L.A. Mar-

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shall responded to charges about killing civilians; and Barry Goldwater contended that Nixon "has shown more political courage in Indochina than all of his opponents and critics put together." But except for an occasional piece by Walt or Eugene Rostow, there was little trace on the Op-Ed page of a more complex conception than either the Left or the Right could offer of what the United States was doing in Vietnam and why and what the long-range geopolitical stakes might be.

Apart from America, the only other countries which presented themselves as significant issues on the Op-Ed page were the two major Communist powers, the Soviet Union and China. In general, the treatment of the Soviet Union was based on what Mihajlo Mihajlov called the theory of Soviet-American convergence. Thus Sir Herbert Butterfield spoke of "a United States and a Russia standing at the top of the world, exactly equal in virtue." In "Kafka and the News," the Swiss playwright Friedrich Dürrenmatt said that in a Communist country like the Soviet Union "power struggles are conducted in a secretive body, the Politbureau," and that "the U.S. administration also has its place in Kafka's castle." In another piece Mihajlov declared that "our whole modern era is the enemy of art. We may be made prisoners not only by a one-party system but also by a modern technological society whose only aim is material prosperity. The means of control of human souls are different there than in Communist countries, where power is more open and crude." Albert Szent-Gyorgyi pronounced the United States and the Soviet Union equally evil on the ground that both were spending large sums of money on arms. In a piece entitled "Banned in Russia," Arthur Miller wrote: "Once blacklisted in my own country, I was now blacklisted in Russia. Comrades, shake hands with the House Committee on Un-American Activities." The Soviet leaders, he added, "are disgracing Russia, just as our witch-hunters disgraced us and are again fingering the tools of repression." The French novelist Romain Gary, a recent Polish immigrant, and several right-wing spokesman insisted on civil liberties and democratic institutions as major points of difference between the Soviet Union and America, but what Arthur Miller called the "ironic parallels" between the two otherwise went unchallenged.

If the Soviet Union emerged from the Op-Ed page as a country remarkable for its similarities, especially in evil, to the United States, Communist China emerged as a glowing alternative to both. Few subjects were written about more intensively on the Op-Ed page in its first thirty months than China, The most frequent single contributor, the novelist Han Suyin, appeared on the very first day of the page's publication with an article praising Mao's "Little Red Book" as "the touchstone" for "the new sense of freedom, a real grassroots democratic spirit, which is evident everywhere." Another column by Madame Suyin, in which she gave the official Maoist line on the removal of Lin Piao (Lin "smoldered with a Napoleon complex," he lost his "revolutionary dedication," he wanted to be "absolute master," and he was thus guilty of "parricide") appeared not once but twice, on successive weeks. In the ensuing months no fewer than three additional pieces also followed the official Maoist line on Lin Piao.

Madame Suyin's adulatory and idealized reports on Chinese society and politics were echoed by many other writers. John Stewart Service found "courtesy, cheerful good humor, and cooperative helpfulness" everywhere in China, and he could identify "no derelicts or beggars, no people in rags and tatters, no signs of starvation nor malnutrition." Paul Dudley White could discover no alcoholism, drug abuse, venereal disease, or pollution. "To be in Peking," he wrote, "was like going back to the Puritan days of my youth, in the Victorian age when it was safe to walk the streets of Boston even in the dark, and when thefts were relatively rare." Chester Ronning was impressed that "The masses of China are awake. They are intelligent, industrious, and virile," with young people "excited and enthusiastic about the scientific approach advocated by Chairman Mao." According to Alberto Jacoviello, China was "a country of philosophers, meaning that in China all discuss all things with a competence and precision that I have not seen in any other country." In addition, "The Chinese soldiers are the humblest in the world. Their only duty is to be more at the service of the people than anyone else." Samuel Rosen, reporting on the Chinese use of acupuncture, observed a patient fully awake during surgery and then leaving the operating room "waving his *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*." A Japanese observer reported that the people "respect and love [Mao] more than ever," and that he was most likely to be seen "in a country place talking peacefully and happily with members of a people's commune." Jack Chen described Mao as "a veritable demiurge of a man," while Robert Williams saw him leading the Chinese people to "the top of humanity."

By contrast, J. Edgar Hoover feared the "shadow of pro-Peking subversion" throughout America. Anna Chennault argued that the best interests of all Chinese were linked to "the American free-enterprise way of life." Vincent Miceli criticized Nixon for thinking he was "above the radical metaphysical conflict raging eternally between the forces of good and evil" by considering himself capable of harmonizing "a world dedicated to criminal aggression and a world dedicated to civil liberty." James Burnham wrote simply that "I'm afraid that I *do* believe a Communist regime is a bad thing."

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The absence in all this of any liberal criticism of Chinese totalitarianism was glaring, especially in view of the abundance of articles on the Op-Ed page condemning the denial of human rights in Greece, Spain, South Africa, Taiwan, the Soviet Union, South Vietnam, and, of course, the United States.

DURING the summer of 1971, a contributor to the Op-Ed page imagined what the reaction would be like in America to the announcement of peace in Vietnam:

> Raging pro-war groups and exultant peaceniks carrying signs that read "America is a Nest of Traitors" and "Peace in Southeast Asia" fought pitched battles in the parks and plazas of a dozen cities. At a rally in a Midwestern town, the commander of the American Legion Post beat his fists into the air as he ticked off the agents of betrayal: "The drug-crazed hippie anarchists, the long-haired college radicals, the pinko professors, the degenerate bohemian intellectuals, the Senators from Moscow, the lying press, the TV commentators, the scum from the ghettos."

That nothing of the sort actually happened when peace was finally announced only underlines the accuracy with which this description reflects two states of mind, at opposite poles to be sure and yet equally distant from contemporary reality, each needing the other, feeding off the other. The author of that article and "the commander of the American Legion Post" have more in common than either would be willing to admit. Together they dominated the Op-Ed page in its first thirty months of publication, effectively setting the terms of discussion, squeezing out for all practical purposes voices critical of extremism and apocalypticism and faddism. The Op-Ed page thereby made it harder rather than easier to arrive at a deeper understanding of difficult public issues, let alone at a new set of terms by which we might as a political culture escape from what George Bernanos once called "the worst, the most corrupting of lies [which] are problems poorly stated."

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On Challenging an Orthodoxy

R. J. Herrnstein

IN THE immediate aftermath of Charles Darwin's epochal *Origin of Species,* social theorists were quick to apply the doctrine to man. If it was true that "survival of the fittest" was nature's rule for selection, could human society do otherwise, these Social Darwinists wondered. For them, nature "red in tooth and claw" became the driving principle of society, replacing the mystical and theological forces of earlier times. The grinding poverty, the brutal inhumanity, the untempered egotism that accompanied the rapid industrialization of the 19th century seemed to some to be part of nature's plan, akin to the sufferings of animals in their "struggle for existence." Success in society, measured by wealth and social position, was the human counterpart, to these theorists, of successful reproduction in animals. Human society was seen as evolving insofar as it favored its most able members.

Almost as soon as Darwinism was applied to social theory, there were problems. First, it did not appear that society's "best" were also society's most prolific in producing offspring, as they would have to be to fulfill their biological destiny. The upper classes simply did not think of having babies as the ultimate measure of their worth. Moreover, if a nation was moved by compassion or political expedience to redistribute some part of its wealth for the sake of its suffering masses, it seemed to be trafficking dangerously with nature's prime tool—survival. What would be the result, the Darwinians asked ominously, if those who otherwise would die or fail to have families, except for private or public charity, started surviving and reproducing? The answer seemed unmistakably clear—the impoverishment of man's hereditary legacy. The biological debt incurred by charity in one generation seemed likely to pass on to its descendants as diminished vigor and adaptability.

For the early Darwinians, the idea of perfectible man had been swamped by the central lesson of the new biology—that all creatures operated within the scope permitted by their biology. For man, the scope might be great, even vastly greater than other animals, but limitless it was not. Furthermore, a man's future was continuously shaped, for good or ill, by the genetic legacy piled up by his ancestors. Instead of a Hegelian evolution toward the one and only perfect society, Darwinians envisioned a host of less promising outcomes, including even extinction. While Darwin himself had managed to avoid these troubled political topics, some of his followers relentlessly pressed what they believed to be the logic of natural selection.

Logic notwithstanding, Social Darwinism started going out of style in the United States after World War I. Biological determinism doubtless came hard to begin with, running as it did against the American grain. Not only did it challenge our egalitarianism, it also said that a Horatio Alger hero might need more than hard work to get ahead. Darwinian evolution portrays nature as wasteful, disinterestedly selecting a few from among the many. That is hard medicine to swallow for a people whose institutions are conceived, in principle if often not in fact, in precisely the opposite terms—that every individual is precious and unique, *equally* precious and unique. But Darwinism was not only disagreeable, it could also be dangerous, as a rationalization for individual or class or racial advantages. And then, in the 1930's, Nazi Germany proved how lethal the idea of group superiority could become in malevolent hands.

For whatever reasons, then, we today have mostly grown up in an intellectual climate dominated by extreme, unrestrained environmentalism, which is the modern alternative to Darwinism, the religious alternatives having gone into decline also. Virtually all influential political and social theories since the 1930's assume that society, together with the individuals composing it, is shaped mainly by social forces. Change those forces, the theorists promise, and man in society will change accordingly. It may be no accident that social scientists gravitate toward theories that give them the maximum potential for practical influence. Thus, among experts, the doctrine of environmentalism reigns, not only supreme, but virtually alone, in almost every sphere of

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human affairs. The biological analogies to human matters—as in Robert Ardrey on territory or Desmond Morris on sex or Konrad Lorenz on aggression—have been resisted, although they clearly strike a resonance among laymen.

To solve our monetary, criminal, medical, economic, educational, emotional, familial problems, we call on environmental solutions—we adjust interest rates, penal practices, health habits, manufacturing processes, school curricula, occupational pressures, parental expectations, and so on. To be sure, no one should object to society's investing resources in the things it can get hold of. If interest rates, penal institutions, medical facilities, capital investment, and so on, are within our control, and if changing them helps, change them we should. But tagging along with that simple and unobjectionable pragmatism comes a conviction that the things we can change are the *only* things that make a difference. In other words, if mortality rates or productivity fail to improve, the remedy is assumed to be more social intervention, often more of the same sort of social intervention. The possibility that society may yield to non-social pressures is usually greeted with the reaction one customarily accords astrology, except for the greater hostility we reserve for threatening notions, which astrology is not. By dogma, not by data, it has been decreed that we may safely disregard non-social agents that we cannot readily control. And the prime non-social agent, to our knowledge, is our own genetic potential. Except for the prevailing orthodoxy, we would want to know how genetic factors interact with our social goals—in medicine, economic advancement, educational innovation, even in the deterrence of crime. While in certain areas of social life, genes may contribute little or nothing, in others their contribution may be both substantial and substantially overlooked, because of the environmentalist doctrine that dominates both our education and our attitudes toward social policy.

As a psychologist submerged for twenty years in the depths of environmentalistic behaviorism, I was slow to identify the current that guided my work, especially since almost everyone around me was caught in the same stream. Behaviorism—that pragmatic, empirical, and distinctly American brand of psychology—has concentrated in the laboratory on the study of the learning process, while its public pronouncements have held out the promise of a science to remake man by applying its "laws" of learning and conditioning. Eventually, however, my confidence in the environmentalist doctrine broke down, when my study of the subject of intelligence testing (or, more broadly, mental testing) persuaded me that the facts about people point to the role of the genes in human society.

In the early days of mental testing, individual differences in test scores were usually taken to show inherited differences among people. Given the Darwinian bias of the time, that was the natural assumption. Today's scholars see quite clearly the weakness of the early bias—genetics may have nothing to do with the similarity between parents and children. Parents give their children more than genes; they also pass on their outlook, their habits, their cultural milieu. Today, the parent-child similarity in scores usually gets blamed on cultural, rather than genetic, inheritance. Today's scholars do not see that their environmental explanation is every bit as rash a leap as the genetic conclusions of early testers. The similarity between parents and children (and among kinfolk generally) may be cultural, genetic, or both in any ratio of admixture. And to find out requires the methods of quantitative genetics, a set of powerful statistical procedures that can unravel how much the genetic and non-genetic factors each contribute to the correlations among kinfolk for any measurable trait.

In a practical sense, we all know perfectly well that people's endowments vary, and that some of those endowments run in families. No one would be surprised to learn that the children of professional basketball players tend to be taller than average. Since basketball players are tall, since height is somewhat inherited, and since tall men probably marry taller-than-average women, the tall children follow naturally. In fact, we know that height is somewhat inherited only because it runs in families, for no one has seen the genes for height. For height, inheritance reveals itself in the pattern of family resemblances rather than in a direct scrutiny of genes. Of course, resemblances can deceive. If, for example, diet was all-important for height, then the resemblances between parents and children would be entirely non-genetic. However, foster children, sharing the same diet, should then resemble their foster siblings as much as ordinary children resemble their natural siblings, which is of course not the case for height. From just such comparisons, and many others, we would gradually build up an estimate of the degree to which height passes through the germ plasm. We would know how much to expect tall people to cluster in given families, which would occasionally produce a basketball player, when height combined with the other requisites.

So it would be for any trait that plays a significant social role and has some genetic basis. And if, for the sake of discussion, one grants the possibility that mental abilities do vary at all genetically, then a powerful and surprising conclusion follows—namely, that society may segregate people into social groupings or classes based at least partly on biology. For if mental capacity is to any degree inherited, and if social standing reflects mental capacity, then social standing must be a mirror, albeit an imperfect one, of

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inherited ability. Moreover, as society equalizes the opportunities for advancement, which is to say as society becomes "fairer," by the ordinary standards of fairness, it will tend more and more to base its social distinctions on genetic grounds. In other words, if parents no longer can pass social and economic advantages on to their children—let us say, because of taxes and welfare and public housing and uniformly excellent public schools—they will instead contribute to their children's success and failure only by their genetic legacy.

The study of mental capacity has made the foregoing argument more than merely hypothetical, but our environmentalist bias has prevented us from noticing that society is willy-nilly subject to the laws of biology. There is evidence not only for the genetic ingredients in mental capacity, but also in social status. Many of the means and ends of contemporary social policy fail to take into account those biological constraints, and they may consequently misfire. Equalizing educational opportunity may have the unexpected and unwelcome effect of emphasizing the inborn intellectual differences among people. It may instead be better to diversify education, providing multiple pathways instead of just one. Technology, while lightening some of the burdens of working people, may be creating others, in particular by wiping out those intellectually simple jobs that used to occupy the less-endowed portion of the population. Even the efforts to encourage social mobility may have its penalties. The biological gap between social classes will grow if the people who rise from lower to higher status are selected for their native ability, as is bound to happen to some extent. All this seemed to me interesting and important enough to set before the general public, and I did so in an article entitled "IQ" in the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine for September 1971.

The article recounted the history of intelligence testing and summarized the main facts about the inheritance of, and the social-class differences in, IQ. While those facts have quietly accumulated in the technical literature for several generations, calling them to the public's attention can be unpopular if not hazardous, as I was soon to discover. Not that tempests in academic teapots are all that noteworthy, but this one may have some broader relevance as proof of the power of the egalitarian orthodoxy.

II

WITHIN a few days after my article's publication on August 19, 1971, I received a letter from a member of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences, in which, among other things, he wrote: "Your heresy on equality of native intelligence will get you crucified if the experience of those of us who have expressed similar ideas is any indication." His experience was first-hand, dating from when he had written on the heritability of intelligence and had been treated like a moral pariah instead of like the scholar he actually is. I answered about two weeks after publication, with guarded optimism: "So far, the reactions to my paper have been civil and, occasionally, gratifying. It is too soon, though, to start believing that the subject of inborn intellectual differences can be discussed rationally in the United States. More likely, I am enjoying the quiet of the summer doldrums."

My correspondent and I were not the only ones awaiting the surge of counter-reaction to my "heresy." In a generally accurate account in *Time* (August 23, 1971) summarizing the main points mostly by direct or indirect quotation from my article, the writer added, "Many blacks and whites will be angered by his defense of intelligence testing because they believe that the racial characteristics it discloses reflect no real differences in ability but only the cultural deprivation of blacks and the cultural bias of IQ tests." That sentence, and the accompanying illustration, showing a white and a black child at school, seemed out of place, since my article took what might be called an explicitly agnostic stand on racial (i.e., black-white) differences in tested intelligence. For technical but compelling reasons, as touched on in my article, I believe that racial and ethnic group differences are hard to pin down as regards inheritance. My interest was not race, but social-class differences. It is true that there was an editor's introduction to my article that mentioned racial differences in IQ, but that, too, avoided drawing any conclusions.

The *Time* writer was not the only commentator who gravitated toward the racial issue. (In fairness to him, he did write, "Herrnstein avoids the racial issue, concentrating on the relative influence of 'nature and nurture' [heredity and environment] in shaping intelligence.") For example, Alvin Poussaint, associate professor of psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, appeared on the Op-Ed page of the Boston *Globe* at the beginning of December, when the uproar was peaking. Fulfilling *Time*'s prophecy of the anger coming, Professor Poussaint said: "Richard J. Herrnstein, professor of psychology at Harvard, may or may not be a racist. Perhaps it doesn't matter. Whether he intended it or not, he has become the enemy of black people and his pronouncements are a threat to the survival of every black person in America." Later on in his article, he asked rhetorically: "Shall we carry banners for Herrnstein proclaiming his right to freedom of speech? Why do these social scientists focus on white-black differences?"

Inadvertently, I would suppose, Professor Poussaint was disseminating something other than the article I had written. Not many of my

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critics seemed to have read it. Perhaps not many people at all read it; it was, after all, rather long and tough going in spots. There seemed, in fact, to be a pattern: those who gave clear signs of having read it rarely got excited, while those who got excited had usually not read it. I spent a good deal of time during these months reciting its contents to people who had gotten upset over something I had not said. In any event, to the people who read Poussaint's précis instead of the original, he was conveying the false impression of an argument for significant, perhaps innate, racial differences. While he may have succeeded in directing the hostility of certain people toward the social sciences in general and me in particular, he was also spreading a message of racial inequality, to those who wanted to hear it as well as to those who did not.

WHAT is the relation between individual differences and racial differences? Perhaps this is the place to answer that question, for the temptation to slide from one issue to the other is apparently almost irresistible, yet the issues themselves may not in fact be fundamentally related. For my purposes, inherited individual differences said something interesting about the membership of social classes. To the extent that social groupings draw on heritable talents, they will also reflect biological constraints. Intelligence tests measure something both heritable and socially significant, and are therefore the prime example of my point. It may, in fact, safely be said that in any complex, modern society that permits some degree of social mobility—capitalist, socialist, or otherwise—the social classes contain some element of genetic segregation for mental capacity. Or, to put it more simply, social position tends to run in families for genetic, as well as for social, reasons. Moreover, if a society minimizes the *social* inheritance of social standing (by sharply progressive taxes and the like), it will maximize the *genetic* inheritance. The connection between social position and genetic inheritance, intimate and direct as it is, cannot be legislated out of existence by any extant, or even any plausible, social reform. As long as genetic factors contribute to success or failure, status differences will have a genetic component.

In contrast, any statistical connection between race and social position could be a by-product of social forces, rather than of anything genetic. In the United States, for example, blacks bunch disproportionately at the lower end of the social scale (although progressively less so in recent years), as shown in average income and unemployment figures, geographical dispersion, average education level, and so on. But since both inherited and non-inherited determiners contribute to a person's average social position, that disproportion could be the outcome of racial prejudice or other social disadvantages, instead of a genetic handicap. Yet it is not hard to see why so many readers assumed that my analysis of class differences cryptically expressed the racial inferiority of blacks. The stages in that false assumption must have gone something like this: 1) I claim that social classes reflect genetic differences; 2) blacks turn up in the lower classes out of proportion to their number in the general population; 3) blacks must therefore have a disproportionate endowment of the genes that keep people in the lower classes. By the same fallacious line of argument: 1) Selection for a basketball team reflects a high genetic endowment for height and agility; 2) college graduates turn up disproportionately often on professional basketball teams, as compared to people who have not graduated; 3) college graduates must therefore be disproportionately tall and agile. The fallacy in both cases is to consider the genetic factor as the only one, so that the outcomes can be due only to genetic differences. Professional teams recruit from college teams; doubtless social classes also recruit less than even-handedly.

We do not know why blacks bunch toward the lower end of the social scale, or, for that matter, why Jews bunch toward the top. Cultural factors, general surroundings, and racial discrimination each complicates the analysis in unknown ways. Given the interest and the data, one might succeed in teasing apart the genetic and non-genetic factors for various groups, but such was neither my goal nor my subject. Instead, I hoped to call attention, first, to the genetic spine running through the social-class continuum, giving it a rigidity that few social theorists, let alone ordinary laymen, recognize; and, second, to the likely stiffening of the genetic spine if society manages to wipe out the complicating factors like racial discrimination and varying social inheritance and give everyone an equal chance.

To be sure, not all my readers read the issue of race into my article. *Newsweek*'s writer, in contrast to *Time*'s, got the point and kept it. After summarizing the article carefully and accurately, he wrote, "But even if he carefully skirts the racial issue, Herrnstein's thesis seems bound to attract fervent opposition among both scholars and political radicals." On August 23, 1971, when *Newsweek* carried that sentence, there was still no sign of "fervent" opposition, for Harvard was still on summer vacation. By the time fall classes began, the September issue of the *Atlantic*, containing my article, had been replaced on the newsstands by October's, and my 200 offprints quickly were depleted. Nevertheless, on September 20 and 21, flyers were handed out at both Boston University and Harvard University. At Boston University, the leaflet's title was "Defeat the Bosses' Ideas," while at Harvard it was entitled "Fight Harvard Prof's Fascist Lies"; one leaflet was in elite type, the other was pica, but the texts were identical and both leaflets were

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signed by the "University Action Group," a new name to me at that point. I later identified the UAG as an assortment of SDS'ers and their older sympathizers, plus members of the Progressive Labor party.

The leaflet called for a demonstration at the offices of the *Atlantic*, which, judging from the brief article the day after in the Boston *Herald-Traveler*, was uneventful. "Several dozen persons" assembled on the street in front of the *Atlantic*'s building, but failed to persuade the editor to stop distributing my article or even to meet with them en masse. He did meet with a few representatives in his office, but they remained unhappy with the *Atlantic*. Nor were they pacified later by the *Atlantic*'s efforts at even-handedness, as in publishing, in the December issue, over seven pages of letters to the editor covering the full range of reactions to my article.

A FEW weeks into the semester, the student daily newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*, carried the news that the "radicals" at Harvard had decided to conduct "a fall offensive against" me. (They were not really *radical*, in the sense of getting at the roots of anything, or even of being politically innovative. On the contrary, my radical critics were quite old-fashioned and doctrinaire, as leftist extremists go, which I will try to prove later on. Meanwhile, I call them radicals because that was how the press referred to them.) By that time, however, I was already well acquainted with the offensive, for the large, undergraduate course that a colleague and I teach was attended by radicals at virtually every lecture, handing out leaflets to the 200-300 students as they entered. One or two new leaflets were prepared each week, setting forth essentially the same points as in the first document, in various permutations and elaborations, usually calling for a "rally" at some appointed time and place. Most of the time, the radicals entered the lecture hall and took seats, although, with one or two exceptions, they were not enrolled in the course. Generally, they were quiet while my colleague or I lectured, but occasionally they would ask questions designed to expose my "racism" or simply make pronouncements to that effect. Often they would approach the front of the lecture hall at the end of a class to denounce me or to accuse me of one thing and another, which, since the accusations were unfailingly false, I would deny. A few times, they hung large placards around the room, and scribbled further accusations across the blackboard.

My colleague and I tried to deliver our lectures as normally as we could, but we sensed we were fighting a losing battle. The atmosphere in the room was hardly conducive to the business of education, with students taking sides "for" or "against" the lecturer. My student allies were no more able to respond with proper objectivity to the material being taught than my opposition, even when it had nothing to do with intelligence or other points of controversy. Scholarly detachment proved to be a crucial, but fragile, ingredient of our course, for it was badly damaged, even though the radicals usually refrained from the flamboyant kinds of classroom disruption, which is why the university administration felt it could not do much to help us.

Meanwhile, the campus in general was deluged with the same leaflets, along with posters glued to fences, trees, buildings, and the walls of the local subway station. One of the most widely circulated posters took the form of a "Wanted" announcement in the post-office (or old Western) style, photograph and all. "Wanted for Racism" above the picture, my name and alias ("Pigeonman") below, were followed by a detailing of charges: I was wanted "for the fraudulent use of 'science' in the service of racial 'superiority,' male supremacy, and unemployment." Then, as documentation, five misquotations purporting to be from my article were given. A year later, scraps of posters can still be seen on trees, fences, etc., but only by one with a trained eye.

At first, in the hope that open discussion might calm things down, I scheduled a public session open to all comers, to answer questions about my article. The meeting was widely advertised, in the *Crimson* and in leaflets by the radicals. The radicals, plus a few hundred others, came, and some questions were asked and answered. At least at the beginning, the two-hour session consisted mainly of my trying to clarify, or simply explain, technicalities of correlational analysis and the measurement of heritability. Toward the end of the meeting, when the departure of most of the rest of the audience had left a high density of radicals, the tone began to deteriorate. Instead of questions, the comments from the floor started sounding more like accusations—of racism, of connivance with political reactionaries, of dishonesty in my presentation of data. But even so, this was one of the better meetings of the year, for it was civilized enough to allow an actual exchange of remarks. (The stranger who threatened to stab me "some night in Harvard yard" as I was leaving the lecture hall, I took to be acting impulsively and not reflecting official SDS or UAG or PLP policy.) All in all, the radicals did not seem (at least to me) to have promoted their cause at the meeting, for they had little besides anger to confront me with. Nevertheless, within a few weeks, they were clamoring for another public meeting. I refused because I thought it was a waste of time, and I think they expected me to. They, in turn, made much of my "unwillingness to discuss the article." However, at no time did any of the more active radicals make any effort to discuss the issues with me privately or by mail or in the seminar on "intelligence" that a colleague and I were conducting during the fall

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semester. In fact, fewer than 20 students enrolled for the course, which was a detailed survey of the very issues that were being so hotly and publicly contested.

While intense, the radical campaign appeared to involve fewer than a dozen active radicals and perhaps another dozen part-time participants, not all of whom were Harvard students. Yet in some respects, they had the support of many students and faculty members, especially in regard to the touchy subject of inheritance and racism. And, without any doubt, the earnest abhorrence of racism was fueling much of the attack directed toward me, however misguided it may have been. Moreover, there were some well-intentioned faculty members who hoped to keep the facts on inheritance and society obscured behind a smokescreen of controversy. As in other recent campus issues, the radicals were acting out, albeit crudely, the sentiments of substantial numbers of "liberals," to use the imprecise, but familiar, designation.

Notwithstanding the sparse ranks, the radicals enjoyed abundant press coverage throughout the autumn and winter, primarily in the *Crimson*, but also in the Boston *Globe*, the Washington *Post*, the *National Observer*, and other major newspapers and magazines. The peak of local news coverage came in the December 8 *Crimson*, containing two full pages of editorial comment and various letters to the editor. The occasion was an ad published in the *Crimson* some days earlier and signed by 107 members of the Harvard faculty, disapproving of the radicals' tactics. The faculty ad had said, among other things: "The openminded search for truth cannot proceed in an atmosphere of political intimidation," and "The entire academic community should make it plain that it regards such harassment [of me] as has occurred as not only an unforgivable attack upon legitimate scholarship but also as an assault upon intellectual freedom."

The majority of the *Crimson* staff, as well as a few faculty members, found the ad provocative and were therefore prompted into further commentary. The main editorial drew a distinction: "We are not convinced by the statement of 107 faculty members which defends Herrnstein on the grounds of a vague 'intellectual freedom.' This freedom is apparently all-inclusive; at least, its proponents have not taken the time to define it. The boundary between ideas and actions is an academic distinction. The distinction, while fuzzy, is important. Generally, intellectual freedom guarantees that ideas will be opposed only by other ideas, and that a theorist will always have a place in the academic community. But in some cases, when theorists become policymakers, the distinction between idea and action vanishes. In such cases—for instance, when social scientists commissioned by the government draw up plans to expand the Vietnam war—the phrase 'intellectual freedom' no longer applies and the academic community can no longer offer sanctuary." As these editorialists saw it, then, the question was whether to put my article in the category of reprehensible policymaking, like expanding the Vietnam war, or whether I qualified for "sanctuary." It was, apparently, not an easy choice, for, after all, my "prognosis of a hereditary caste of the unemployable could leave ominous thoughts in the minds of some readers," and, moreover, it was clear that "the threat of [my] ideas is more dangerous than the imagined threat of SDS and UAG to intellectual freedom." Furthermore, "by publicizing the uncertainty of the ideas and the potential harm of their implications, SDS and UAG have performed a service." But even so, the majority of the editorial board concluded that "in this case, the concept of academic freedom applies. Herrnstein's opponents should limit themselves to the arena of ideas." I was awarded a qualified sanctuary.

III

I HAD a long-standing date to speak to the staff and students of the psychology department at the University of Iowa about some of my research on the learning process in animals. A few weeks before my scheduled talk on February 25, 1972, the chairman of the Iowa department called to say that the radicals at his university were stirring up interest in my impending visit, and that the interest was not friendly. He was calling to give me a chance to think about what he saw as the three obvious alternative courses of action: cancel the visit, come as planned, or come and debate with the radicals to "defuse" the situation. I asked for a few days to think it over, and to see the pertinent leaflets and articles in the student newspaper that he offered to send. The stirrings in Iowa City, it turned out, began when the student newspaper published verbatim a radical pamphlet I had seen in Harvard Square under the title, "Public Statement on the Herrnstein Controversy," except that their headline writer had retitled it as "Noted Psychologist a Racist, Sexist." Next came some letters to the editor defending my article by pointing out that, contrary to the pamphlet, it was neither about, nor took any position on, racial or sex differences in mental ability or the causes of contemporary unemployment or poverty; and finally the inevitable counterreaction from the radicals. And it was also inevitable that at some point in the exchange one of the radicals noted that I was scheduled to speak at Iowa and that I should be "confronted."

Soon leaflets were drumming up interest among those who might have missed the coverage in the student newspaper. One leaflet started off to depict me as a racist by means of a string of misquotations, and ended with the following:

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> Right now at Harvard there is a growing student-faculty movement against Herrnstein to remove his cover of "scholarship" and expose him for the racist quack he is. They have made it impossible for him to spread his theory in public without controversy in the entire Boston area. In fact, he has said that he may not teach undergraduates anymore. Now he is coming to the Midwest to speak to students at the University of Iowa. Iowa City SDS has called a Midwest demonstration against Herrnstein, with people coming from all over this region to confront Herrnstein. The next day we'll have a conference to discuss ways to continue the fight against racism on our campuses. Come with us to confront Richard Herrnstein! ! ! !

The leaflet promised a teach-in on Monday before my talk on Friday, featuring the national secretary of SDS, then a rally and march just prior to the demonstration at my talk, followed the next day by the "Midwest Conference on Racism." It also reminded its readers of an impending National Convention (on racism) at Harvard, and offered transportation to Cambridge. Among the stack of leaflets was one of the "Wanted for Racism" posters that had been pasted all over the walls and fences around Harvard Square. It was clear that there was at least enough coordination among these radical groups so that they could swap leaflets.

When I called back, I told the chairman of the department that I would not debate with the radicals, because they were obviously not interested in debating my article with me, as their pamphlets amply revealed. However, I said, I did not like to think that I had lost my right to move freely around the country; consequently I preferred to come to give my talk on animal behavior, assuming that I could do so safely. And as to safety, it seemed to me and the chairman, the question was strictly numerical: a dozen or so radicals could do little more than shout, while a large angry crowd might be menacing physically. We agreed to wait to see how many turned up for the Monday teach-in, and also to get an impression of their intentions.

While awaiting the next report, I received a call from Princeton University, where I was scheduled to speak about two weeks later, also on my research on animals. As at Iowa, the Princeton radicals were using the student newspaper to let it be known that I was coming to speak, and that they were planning to confront me, for my "racism." A psychology professor (who had earlier been a colleague at Harvard) was reported in the newspaper to have called my article "at the least, . . . evil, elitist, and racist." In another item, a radical was quoted as saying that I would be "forced" to answer questions, presumably if I did not answer voluntarily. I told my caller about the troubles at Iowa, and asked to defer a decision about Princeton until after I had had some more experience with the problem. He was more than willing to wait. I also asked him to convey to the radicals my willingness to answer any questions they might care to send me. Although I believe my message was delivered, no questions have ever arrived.

MEANWHILE, the teach-in at Iowa proved an uncertain harbinger. About 100 people turned up, including an unknown number of university administration spies and curiosity seekers. The national secretary of SDS was quoted as calling for a disruption of my talk, but she did not get universal assent from her partisans. While the speakers at the teach-in generally agreed on my villainy, there was as yet no consensus on a course of action to deal with me. I felt obliged to interpret the news optimistically and therefore agreed to come as planned. The chairman of the department appeared to be glad of that decision, for he did not want it to seem that Iowa had failed to meet the challenge of a couple of dozen radicals out of a university community well in excess of twenty thousand.

When I arrived in Cedar Rapids at about noon on Friday, the professor who met me at the airport conveyed reports of an influx of radicals, from as far away as Chicago and Madison, Wisconsin. Driving through the late winter countryside between Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, we talked about the crescendo of radical exhortation during the week. It was still not clear what the radicals were going to do, but whatever it was, they would have as much help as they could muster from a radius of at least a few hundred miles. I still felt obliged to continue as planned and spent a quiet few hours visiting the psychology department's laboratories and meeting some of the staff and graduate students.

The outcome remained uncertain until about 3:45—45 minutes before the scheduled time for my talk. We were then told by a campus policeman that a group of 75 to 100 people had gained entrance to the lecture hall (whose capacity was variously estimated to me during the day as between 250 and 350), in spite of the campus police who were supposedly stationed at the door to keep anyone out until just a few minutes before 4:30. By a few minutes after 4:00, the lecture hall was filled, but not with the usual audience for a technical, rather mathematical, talk on the learned responses of pigeons. The legitimate audience for that talk—whose world population falls considerably short of 350, let alone the fraction in and around Iowa City—was unlikely to turn up much before 4:25. And not only was the lecture hall filled, its walls were festooned with placards denouncing me as racist, fascist, etc., and speakers were already addressing the crowd —warming them up. The chairman talked by telephone to someone higher up in the administration about the impending crisis and apparent-

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ly received nothing more helpful than a suggestion that we move to a larger lecture hall, a suggestion I quickly rejected.

At the suitable time, the chairman, a professor in the department, and I walked to the physics building, housing the lecture hall. Going in through a back corridor, we could hear the crowd shouting and chanting but we could not see them. I had earlier been told that if during my talk I should suddenly "feel some urgency" about escaping from the hall, I should go through a particular pair of double doors, thence through another single door, whereupon I would find myself in an alley at the end of which a green, unmarked car with a driver would be awaiting me. I was rehearsing those instructions mentally when we arrived at the small preparation room adjoining the hall. In the room were about 8 or 10 uniformed campus policemen and a smaller group of men in mufti. The crowd next door was noisily chanting, "We want Herrnstein!" The thought of the equations I needed to scribble on the blackboard to help explain my slides of graphs and data seemed hopelessly incongruous.

It was now clear that I was not going to be able to give my talk, even if I went into the hall and tried. Some observers estimated that there were 75 to 100 active demonstrators in the room, both local and out-of-towners, and most of the rest were spectators attracted by the prospect of the confrontation. No doubt, most of the scholarly audience for my talk was locked out in the front corridor, along with the couple of hundred other people who arrived after the room was jammed beyond its capacity.

In the prep room, I asked the head of the campus police whether he could assure my safety if I went into the lecture hall. In effect, he said no. I asked further if it would help him do his job if I went in and allowed my talk to be disrupted, for it was obvious that the crowd would not accord 60 seconds, let alone 60 minutes, to the mathematical basis of learned behavior in animals. I was thinking of the growing legalism on today's campuses, especially in regard to leftist disruptions. Would my not going in make it impossible to prosecute or discipline the disrupters? Perhaps, I thought, I had a responsibility to allow my talk to be disrupted. The police chief (quite properly, now that I look back on it) answered that I should not concern myself with helping him do his job. "Then," I said, "let's call it off." I did not like calling it off, but I liked still less the bravado of going ahead with it under impossible circumstances. And there did seem to be some physical risk, since the police clearly had no control whatsoever over the situation. It may really have been quite an innocuous occasion, but at the time it sounded to me not unlike a Colosseum-ful of eager Romans. With evident relief, the police hustled me through the door leading to the alley and there was the unmarked car, as promised.

One outcome of the episode was a decision to handle Princeton differently. I called my contact there within a day or two and asked what would be done to assure my safe coming and going, particularly in light of the well-publicized threat to "force" me to answer questions. I reiterated my willingness to answer questions by mail or in a scholarly setting. But I was determined to give the talk I had been invited to give—on visual perception in pigeons—and not on whatever it was the radicals had in mind. He promised to inquire into the administration's plans for my visit. A call back a few days later provided no basis for optimism. Except for the department chairman's avowed hope that I would be able to give my talk, the university administration was going to do nothing. While I had no reason to doubt the sincerity of the chairman's hopes, I considered them futile and therefore cancelled the talk.

The first public manifestation of the Princeton administration was a letter in the student newspaper, the *Daily Princetonian*, a day after my scheduled talk. (At Iowa, too, the administration became publicly active only after the event, perhaps with some justification since it had no obvious precedent to guide it.) Said President Goheen of Princeton, "The administration *can* do nothing 'to guarantee a scholar's right to speak,' when the scholar withdraws from an invitation to lecture without exploring the extent to which he could have been assured a fair and uninterrupted hearing." Mr. Goheen was chiding (besides me), not the SDS or UAG, but a group of students (signing themselves as the "USA") for an ad they placed in the *Daily Princetonian* protesting the university's failure to assure my freedom of movement. The president's view of the matter was partly shared by a chemistry professor, who also had a letter in that issue of the student newspaper, identifying himself as a spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union. Said Professor Jones, "That Professor Herrnstein was unwilling to discuss publicly his views on IQ is unfortunate, but does not really cloud the issue. His unwillingness is not grounds for threats and intimidation." Lest there be any doubts about the threats, the very same page of the *Daily Princetonian* featured an article by a spokesman for the radicals stating the plans for my visit: "Herrnstein [would] be allowed to deliver his talk uninterrupted, after which we would use the question period to challenge him on his racist, sexist, and elitist theories. If he refused to debate or answer questions, we would have blocked the doors of the room until he consented to speak on the IQ controversy."

Both President Goheen and Professor Jones also expressed some sympathy for me. And Professor Jones even expressed displeasure at the

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behavior of the radicals, which was, in fact, the main point of his letter. I, however, had begun to see that between the radicals and the liberal-intellectual community there was a more subtle connection than I had at first appreciated. Thus, while Professor Jones deplored the conduct of the radicals, he also left some doubts about my character. And so did President Goheen, although the only conduct he publicly deplored at this time was that of the conservative students who placed the ad saying that Princeton had lost something by not assuring my safety.

At Princeton, as at Harvard, administrators could not make too public a display of solidarity with me (although privately I often received unqualified support). Their problem, some would admit, was not to seem to be defending my "views," while defending my rights. And that was a valid distinction, as far as it went. It was all the more compelling if the "views" were unpopular to a large fraction of the university, as the hereditarian case is under any circumstance. However, the radicals had promulgated a truly offensive rendition of my article—as racist, fascist, anti-working class, and so on. Even if an administrator had taken the trouble to read my article and had seen that the accusations were false—as several clearly did—he could ill afford to seem to be associating himself with it. Some of my more knowledgeable colleagues were caught in a similar position. They told me privately that they agreed with the article, but publicly they chose to remain noncommital. By stirring up an angry controversy, the radicals had thus loaded the dice against the open exchange of argument and information, as President Bok at Harvard finally said publicly, after it had dragged on for seven months. I suspected that many liberal social scientists, wedded to environmentalism, were not keen for open exchange in any event, even when they genuinely deplored the radical tactics.

IV

THE occasional hostility of Marxists toward the study of genetics is neither new nor localized at Harvard, Iowa, or Princeton. Its most egregious manifestation was T. D. Lysenko's domination over Russian biology during the Stalinist era. Starting in the mid-30's, as Stalin was consolidating his tyranny, classical Mendelian theory and its successors suddenly became a target of political attack masquerading as scientific criticism. For example, in 1937 a Russian agricultural expert denounced the chromosome theory and its application to agriculture as a "fascist distortion of genetics and fascist utilizaton of genetics for political aims, inimical to the progress of mankind." That particular quotation (given in Zhores Medvedev's *The Rise and Fall of T. D. Lysenko*, 1969) turned up in the journal edited by Lysenko, one of the prime organs in the assault on modern genetics.

The Lysenkoite aberration might have remained nothing more than a historical curiosity had it not had the approval, and no doubt also the assistance, of Stalin. Lysenko's targets were both the subject itself, as it had been built by Mendel's successors, and certain Russian biologists who were fruitfully developing an indigenous version. As a result, for about twenty-five years, both the subject and its honest investigators fared woefully in Russia. During that period, genetics in Russia was stunted, if not crippled, and the geneticists, particularly the most eminent ones, were driven out of their laboratories and institutes —by lack of support, imprisonment, and even execution. Until at least the mid-1950's, the price for intellectual integrity in the study of genetics came cruelly high.

Genetics was no random victim of revolutionary zeal, for in its case, science and politics were at cross-purposes in Russia. The leaders of the Russian Revolution, committed as they were to remaking society in a hurry, had little sympathy for the idea that the hereditary endowment of living beings—from wheat to man—was fixed in the germ plasm, largely out of reach of the influence of the environment, even the new socialist environment. Neither the random and unpredictable changes of genetic mutation nor the glacial drift of natural selection suited the purposes, let alone the temperament, of Marxist visionaries. And according to modern genetics, those are the only ways to alter the hereditary makeup of species. Even the ultimate Marxist goal, the "classless" society, was threatened by the possibility of genetic human differences. It is hard to argue that the "class struggle" can be resolved by a redistribution of wealth and capital, if it should turn out that something more than economics distinguishes the contending classes. And the well-established fact that the upper and lower classes differ in their psychological make-up, for example in their measured intelligence, plus the fact that intelligence, so defined, is substantially heritable, can be just such an unwieldy complication for Marxists, though by no means the only one.

The rhetoric of Lysenko and his associates, as recounted by Medvedev, himself a beleaguered Russian biologist, makes the affinity to my radical critics undeniable. Summarizing some of the atrocities committed during the late 1930's against the study of man's inheritance, Medvedev wrote: "The virtual ban on investigations in human genetics had very harmful consequences, not yet fully understood or assessed. The direct responsibility for this lies with those 'critics' who vulgarly identified human genetics with racism and fascism." Not only the vulgar accusations of "racism" and "fascism," but also the political paranoia can be found in both the Russian and

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the domestic Marxist reactions to the application of biology to the study of man, as shown by the following quotations. First, from Lysenko, writing in 1947 on the Darwinian conception of human society in relation to capitalist countries:

> Bourgeois science had to invent intraspecific struggle. In nature, they [i.e., the bourgeois scientists] say, within each species there is a cruel struggle for food, which is in short supply, and for living conditions. The stronger, better-adapted individuals are the victors. The same, then, occurs among people: the capitalists have millions, the workers live in poverty, because the capitalists supposedly are more intelligent and more able because of their heredity.
>
> We Soviet people know well that the oppression of the workers, the dominance of the capitalist class, and imperialist wars have nothing to do with any biological laws. They are all based on the laws of a rotting, moribund, bourgeois, capitalist society.

Next, a few sentences from a leaflet handed out in my class last October:

> The emergence of Herrnstein as their ideological mouthpiece is itself a sign of the desperate state of the Rockefellers and other racist rulers. For Herrnstein offers only the stalest, exhausted thoughts and data. The thoughts are no more than warmed over social Darwinism that was concocted a century ago to justify the oppression and class structure of society. . . . Herrnstein's ideas do not stand in isolation; they are attempts to render palatable acts of inhumanity and exploitation. As such they must be fought as hard as those acts themselves.

Lysenko's mentor, a Russian philosopher named I. I. Present, writing in 1962 on "Dialectical Materialism and the Problem of Genetics," further exemplifies the tone of the Lysenkoite suppression of modern genetics, as follows:

> The world bourgeoisie mobilized all ideological means of struggle against Marxism and those scientific theories which serve as a basis and consolidation of the dialectic-materialistic outlook. In particular, Weismannism-Morganism with its theory of an immortal hereditary substance was widely utilized. With the aid of this doctrine, attempts are made to justify the exploitation of workers, colonialism, and racial discrimination. At the same time it is used for proving the proposition that the moving force of social development is not the manufacture of material goods, not the class struggle, but the hereditary substrate, above all, of great personalities.

Like their Lysenkoite antecedents in Russia, my radical critics apparently also felt that one way to fight exploitation, colonialism, and racism was to undermine the study of human genetics. But the American branch struggles under substantial disadvantages, including the lack of official support from the government, the shortage of working cadres, and the unabated flourishing of "Weismannism-Morganism"—i.e., the genetic theory of inheritance—in biology departments. Not surprisingly, therefore, American anti-genetics has, at least so far, been far less virulent than Russian. Here, the price for pursuing the study of human genetics is mainly unpopularity; there, it was truly prohibitive.

The boom in the experimental branch of genetics has resulted in a curious American inconsistency on the subject of human differences, not infrequently acute among biologists and geneticists themselves. And not just among Marxists either, for the environmentalism and egalitarianism that made genetics distasteful to the Russians also characterizes a vein within contemporary American liberalism. Thus, the very same people who one day abhor the idea of tampering with people's genes may, the next day, vigorously deny the conclusion that human society involves genetic factors. But if they really doubt the genetic ingredient in human affairs, why do they fret over genetic engineering? For some people, at least, politics explains the inconsistency. Liberals traditionally distrust the government, hence they are keenly reluctant to give away any power over the germ plasm. But, at the same time, contemporary liberals tend to be egalitarian, which sometimes becomes almost as firm a belief in innate human uniformity as among the Lysenkoites, especially when they are thinking about society's problems. Genetic engineering runs afoul of the distrust of government; my thesis on hereditary classes runs afoul of egalitarianism. Yet, if genes were not socially important, neither would warrant such alarm.

The egalitarian-environmental outlook is the prevailing bias of American intellectuals in general. I doubtless share the bias myself, for I find it far more congenial to hear that some social problem will be solved by new legislation than to be told that society may have to face problems whose roots are biological as well as social. Biology as an instrument of social change—for example, eugenics—strikes me, too, as posing gruesome possibilities that may be worse than the problem being solved. No more than most of my fellow academics do I like the prospect of some people tampering with some other people's germ plasm. But while that awful prospect is, for the moment, hypothetical, my thesis sets forth a contemporary biological reality in society. While the inheritance of intellectual capacity may not be as alarming in principle as direct genetic manipulation, it is clearly more timely.

To make matters worse, I note that as society succeeds in equalizing opportunity, the genetic factors likely become relatively more important, simply because the non-genetic factors, having been equalized, no longer contribute to the differences among people. And to cap it off, my

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case relies only on well-documented findings, easily found in many standard textbooks. The novelty, such as it is, in my argument is to have brought those commonplace facts into coordination and shown that the outcome is lethal to all forms of doctrinaire egalitarianism, both Marxist and American liberal-academic.

Some of my colleagues at Harvard, like my stymied hosts at Iowa and Princeton, have been earnestly shocked by how crudely the radicals deal with those who write on the heritability of IQ. Even committed leftists have expressed their sympathy and concern. Yet, the radicals have served well the egalitarian cause by deflecting attention away from the issues themselves. Insofar as public impressions are concerned, the radicals have protected the egalitarian position by isolating it from a confrontation with facts that would destroy its underpinnings. The sequence goes something like this:

1) Radicals denounce me (or others who bring the facts to public attention) as "racist," "fascist," etc.

2) In response, the liberal "expert" deplores the crudeness of the attack, while expressing apparently scholarly reservations about the "questionable" logic or the "tentative" findings or the underlying "political" biases in the document in question. The liberal expert's position appears to take the middle ground between the radicals at one extreme, and, for example, my article at the other.

3) The public, observing the range of views, also takes the intermediate position—in this instance, the liberal one. It concludes that the prevailing egalitarianism of American political philosophy has not yet run into unequivocal factual trouble. Since the inherent American bias is egalitarian to begin with, the outcome appears both natural and desirable.

Most people, even most academics, do not have the time, training, or occasion to work through the technical literature on a controversial subject. Instead, they must rely on professionals for a disinterested evaluation. From some professionals, they hear that the inheritance of intelligence is "questionable." What they fail to find out is that the question is not whether IQ is heritable, but whether the heritability is 60 per cent or 80 per cent (or even more, according to some estimates). The public does not discover that the heritability of IQ is not a *new* finding, on which the burden of proof suddenly falls, but the standard, virtually uncontested (i.e., by conflicting data) finding since the first decade of mental testing. Estimates of the high heritability of IQ started accumulating in the technical scientific literature by 1910. With improvements in the statistical techniques of quantitative genetics and in the quality and quantity of intelligence testing, the heritability of IQ has doubtless become psychology's best proved, socially significant empirical finding. In regard to the major, long-term social implications, it matters little whether the heritability is 60 per cent or 80 per cent, or even 40 per cent or 90 per cent, for, in any case, the more society equalizes opportunity, the more it will tend to drive the heritability higher, making genetic factors progressively more important.

The hostility of the radicals, the obscurantism of some academics, the public silence of other academics, the one-sided coverage in the news, the increasing reluctance of scientific periodicals to publish hereditarian findings or scientific agencies to support hereditarian research—these are all signs of a political orthodoxy on human equi-potentiality, to which scholarship has become hostage. I believe it is an orthodoxy whose social costs we can no longer afford, and not just, or even mainly, because it chokes off honest inquiry.

The false belief in the equality of human endowment leads to rigid, inflexible expectations, often doomed to frustration, thence to anger. Ever more shrilly, we call on our educational and social institutions to make everyone the same, when we should instead be trying to mold our institutions around the inescapable limitations and variations of human ability.

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A Pride of Candidates

Dorothy Rabinowitz

WHEN the mayoral race for New York City is over, the considerable number of aspirants to that office will have spent themselves, to say nothing of their fortunes, proving which among them can do most for the citizens of the city; the citizens, on the other hand, will have been deciding which among the candidates can hurt them the least. The difference in the two emphases is substantial, but to the aspirants Left, Right, and Center before whom the Mayor's mansion leans so intimately into the mind, the distinction is immaterial. One can hardly blame them; the power of Gracie Mansion is believed to be second only to that of the White House. Whoever supposes that the Governor's post is more desirable need only look at Governor Rockefeller's poignant efforts to recreate some semblance of Manhattan up in the state capitol by constructing, at a cost of millions of dollars, a mall and some surrounding office buildings whose utility puzzles even those legislators who have been persuaded to use them; the Governor himself spends as little time as possible in Albany. The mayoral candidates, even the simpler among them, do not underestimate the rewards of a job whose power is roughly that which accrues to a small White House, to say nothing of the house itself: the high fences, the grounds, and the noble architecture which go with the territory.

To be sure, it has always been part of an unwritten law in city politics, as any other, to make less of its rewards than meets the eye. The crisis of the cities, as the media call it, has been with us for years; it is only of late that the present, lame-duck occupant of the mayor's mansion has gone about so haggard. There are some to whom his demeanor is proof of the impossible strains the city puts on her servants, but their numbers are few among political people. "Everyone Else Is Tired: He Is Fresh" went the campaign slogan once, over a set of handsome features, and a pair of shoulders on which rested the unfair burden of so much more than the usual quotient of energy among men. Local wit has lately reversed the respective terms of the slogan, in view of the fact that eyes which once flashed progressively about the city are now inclined to coldness. Time and office have worked their changes. Yet, not the riots in Harlem, the transportation workers' strike, the sanitation men's strike, or the teachers' strike could do to the present occupant of Gracie Mansion what an unflattering foray into Presidential primaries did. There is a kind of adversity in political life which is wholly personal and thus smashing; which sets off, for a moment, that difference between politics and governance which will persist, even in the face of the modern wisdom which has pronounced the two indivisible. It is politics, not governance, which thins the hair and darkens life for politicians.

Those strains have barely begun to appear in this year's contestants, for whom running and losing is so much less serious a trial than that which falls to the incumbent. In addition, the pre-primary period of any important election always consists of an uncountable number of candidates, of half-announcements and threats to announce, the rewards for which activity may range from media attention to a miraculous shuffle of the cards in which one's name is placed in the third spot on the ticket. Big-time politics is full of names in secondary place on the ticket whose presence can no more be accounted for than the atmosphere, and which owes as much to chance as to political practicality. The urban blight had already taken hold of political consciousness when the late Congressman William F. Ryan ran for mayor in 1965; the middle class threatened to depart and businesses were leaving the city in earnest. In accordance with political need he chose as his candidate for comptroller a man who was a liberal, a Jew, and a successful businessman no one knew much about. It emerged soon after the man's designation that the acumen which distinguished his business affairs had led him, not unreasonably, to move his own factory out of the city. It was not, as sins go, a terrible one but to the Reform constituency on which his ticket largely depended, it was held to be cardinal, betokening as it did to them a lack of that very faith in the city's health

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to which politicians are pledged. Of course, the ticket on which he ran provided disaster enough to go around without his help; but in Brooklyn, many years later in a relatively obscure contest, the former candidate for comptroller on the mayoral ticket found the principal issue raised against him was still his mislocated factory.

These fates aside, only to appear on the ticket in an important race is tantamount to being put before the voters in a fashion which no private political endeavor can hope to match. For this, an unseemly large number of candidates are willing to spend their fortunes and the fortunes of their friends and families in pre-primary runs whose hopelessness is clear to all, if not to them. In the New York City Democratic primary this year, which will be held early in June, the names of all the candidates for the mayoralty nomination will come before the enrolled Democratic voters. If no candidate gets more than 40 per cent of the votes, there will be a run-off later in the month to select the party's candidate for mayor in the general election of November. It is possible that one or more of the serious candidates now in the running may drop out before the primary in June, but that, by the nature of the psychology which governs primary campaigns, is unlikely, at least in most of the cases here under consideration. However clear it is to everyone else that he will lose, there is, for the candidate and his friends, always the chance that he will win. Neither friends nor aides are likely to credit evidence to the contrary, much less bring it to the attention of the candidate. When the candidate loses on primary night, the evidence is still not such as to contradict the chances he had. What he does is to count the votes garnered by those competitors in the primary who are nearest him in the political spectrum, and subtract them from the total he should have gotten had they not run—in which case he would certainly have won the primary. An even stronger reason for not dropping out is the large amount of money which is spent early in the campaign. All of the serious candidates have had full-paid staffs and rented campaign offices since the fall. At the half-way mark some of them will already have spent $50,000 of the money raised by their families and friends, with more being raised all the time. Even the candidate taken by an unlikely bout of hopelessness cannot well announce that he is withdrawing, and thus squandering all the money and the time committed to him. Indeed, the whispers of imminent withdrawal about one candidate or another are usually found to originate with his nearest competitor. The New York City Democratic primary is thus bound to remain almost as crowded in June as it was in February.

YET, neither crowds, political tradeoffs, nor levity can preserve the election process from the stiffness which surrounds politics now. Prior to the citywide elections of 1965 there was an air of moral readiness among politicians, if not of brashness, which is now only a recollection in those of them running this year. It was John Lindsay, a liberal Republican, who captivated the great and the small in the political organizations of the city, not to say those Democrats who were prone anyway to look upon loyalty to the traditional Democratic party as reactionary. They viewed him in contrast to the Democratic candidate, a party loyalist, a budget director—John Lindsay versus Abraham Beame. It was the voice of moral transcendence against the gray accountant's mind. If John Lindsay spoke to the largeness of spirit in them, his opponent, it was evident, spoke to the small. The very difference in their physical size was suggestive. The sight of the pale, gray-haired accountant who blinked a lot, who looked to be barely over five feet, poised against the lines of his opponent, was a gift to the moral imagination of the sort nature provides only from time to time.

On the night in 1965 when the two opponents came before the largest Reform-Democratic club in Manhattan (and, by all the evidence, one of the most active arms of the Democratic party in the city) the atmosphere was not dissimilar to that happy defiance of organized religion which is occasioned under the tents of evangelists. When the candidate of the Democratic party appeared before this audience of Reformers and the liberal-progressives who shared their beliefs, he was greeted by a rolling thunder of boos. They wished to dissociate themselves from the drear accountant's mind; from the bosses (he had been supported by the regular Democratic party machinery for all of his political life); from the smallness and the pallor which nature visits on the backward looking whom those in the audience had set themselves to expunge from public life.

To be sure, there were Democrats in the corners of the room horrified at this display of rudeness to the candidate. (He had, in addition to his other disqualifications, just defeated the Reform candidate in the Democratic primary, but to no avail. These Democrats would lead his opponent's campaign and win.) Later that night, John Lindsay strode in to an audience which stood and cheered him in a sound of unanimity rarely heard in such environs. It was a reception which expressed a longing for that which transcended the mean and the petty in political life; a response to the wit and the grace of visage which nature has been known to confer on those worthy to go forth and be tested by the adversary. Eight years later the majority of those Democrats who rose when John Lindsay entered the hall can scarcely bear to hear his name, whether sitting or standing; those who reviled the accountant's mind speak longingly now of fiscal responsibility.

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THE stiffness of the city campaigns this year is the sort which settles on politicians who have learned well the lessons of the last few years, but who must, nevertheless, pay a certain homage to that portion of the past in which they took part. The candidates for mayor, and for every other office in the cities and the states, have heard the voice of the electorate in which there is now as much affection for the transcendent moral stance as for the plague. Still, something in the nature of politics makes it impossible to turn one's back on once vaunted beliefs. It is true of the Old Politics; it is true of the New Politics; it is true of matters of high moral principle as of ordinary affairs in governance. There is something healthy in the polity which demands that the word spoken not be denied, as though it had never existed. Deep in the soul of the polity is a resistance to nihilism which ordains that it, which tolerates so much else, will not bear outright nullification of the politician's words; though hedging, withdrawal, and quiet evasion of those words are among the benefits traditionally accorded him. And the electorate's vengeance, when it is forced to it, is considerable, as witness the response to McGovern's 1000-per-cent support for Thomas Eagleton.

The candidates in the most unpleasant position today are those whose careers were founded in the Left-liberal constituency. If the bulk of that constituency is now turned around, the candidates it once nurtured have a hard time turning with them.

Consider Albert Blumenthal, a well-known leader of the state legislature, whose Liberal-Reform bailiwick in upper Manhattan once packed the highest density of political activity in the world per square foot. It was an urban, educated Jewish bloc for the most part; they voted heavily in primaries, carried petitions, and came, straight after their suppers, to work on social-action committees in their clubs. The crime rate is so high in his district now that all citizens are reluctant to take part in political activity which would require that they go out at night. They voted for John Lindsay a second time, rather than for a candidate who was wholly repellent to them; they are not likely to have to make such a choice this time. Blumenthal, who has a distinguished reputation in the legislature, and who led the fight to legalize abortion, now finds himself face to face with an issue which the years of his political career have trained him to treat in the way that urban, educated Jews are wont to permit. He knows, as all the candidates do, that the issue of the 1973 campaign is the safety of citizens, neighborhood preservation, and plain law-and-order. He would be hard on criminals, of course; but he has always been able to discuss these matters with his constituents with the understanding between them that he need not talk of clapping all criminals in jail, or of arming police with shotguns. There were certain root causes of crime that he and his constituents understood implicitly between them, even if they spoke less of these things now than they used to: that the jails were overcrowded, that there was no opportunity for the proper rehabilitation of prisoners, that the criminal-justice system bore almost as much blame as the criminals for the crime rate. They understood these things in the way that friends do who have gone to the same school at the same time in history, among whom certain premises in life remain the same, whatever other disagreements the years bring.

This is the politician who will now have to tell the voters in the rest of the city his program for the alleviation of crime. It will be a brave candidate who goes among the Italians of Brooklyn to tell them that the jails are overcrowded and prison conditions disgraceful. He has undoubtedly learned by now that the voters of the city want—in the absence of more immediate hope—to know not so much what the candidate is going to do about crime, but how he *feels* about criminals. Blumenthal does not know how to talk about such things; he does not know because it has been the premise of his political life and of his habitat not to have to talk of such things. There is a language for this sort of feeling; every citizen is allowed to speak it and he does, if not in public then in private. The liberal candidate of Blumenthal's type (he is the choice of the New Politics-New Democratic Coalition) can pay that language no heed himself but must, to begin with, find a way of not saying those things which political habit has by now made second nature. Saying and not saying, he will have a hard time in the talk department. In the climate in which he works, nothing a politician utters can be perceived as other than a code; every part of the political spectrum attributes the same meaning to the same words, whether the speaker is describing a social condition or a social position. If Blumenthal says, as he does, that the liberalism of twenty years ago is inappropriate to the problems of the 70's, everyone understands the same thing by it; he has only to mention the word "Attica" to lose more than he wins.

Herman Badillo, a second candidate, may wish but cannot afford to sound like a man of the future either. He is running as the representative of the blacks, the Puerto Ricans, the poor, and, possibly, of some other citizens as well. Badillo is also deemed to have a power base in circles which were once more powerful than they are now, such as the New Politics element in the Reform clubs. He is a handsome Puerto Rican whom former Mayor Wagner raised to prominence in short order, and who later ran against his former mentor for the mayoralty. He is a Congressman now. He has been active in Jewish affairs, in black as well as in Puerto Rican affairs; he is, one might say, the minority candidate. Yet it is

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not easy for him to sound the note which minority constituencies have learned to know as their own in the past decade: there are no angry promises, no talk of a new future for the disenfranchised. He points out, in fact, that he was one of the first opponents of school decentralization. Of course, he explains that he always knew decentralization was a weapon that the white majority might use to preserve segregation; aside from which, decentralization is chaotic. The words are minority, but one hears in the music the renunciation of passion one hears everywhere among the candidates. Badillo has fewer problems of identification than Blumenthal, having been able to isolate clearly the segment of the population to which he connects: the blacks, the Puerto Ricans, and at least some of the liberal Jews of the New Politics. His chances are nevertheless deemed poor by most politicians, despite hopes of liberal money and endorsement from important quarters. For, in any primary contest, if roughly 70 per cent of the registered Democratic voters turn out, not more than 6 per cent of them are black and Puerto Rican. Every politician knows that, whatever hopes are pinned on their favor, blacks and Puerto Ricans do not come out and vote much in primaries; they do not even come out and vote as substantially as they might in regular elections. Badillo hopes in any event to address himself in so unspecific a manner to them that other groups will not find him too narrow for their concerns.

EDWARD KOCH has turned on his old constituency and thrown himself at the head of the politically disaffected. He is in part allowed to do this because he has always been known as something of a lone wolf, the sort of lone wolf, to be sure, who attracted a considerable following among liberal-Reform elements in the days when lone-wolfishness was a primary source of appeal to them. It spoke to the isolate image they treasured in themselves, and the capacity to strive against odds which pleased them as much as any victory they might thus obtain. It was in the period before they took on issues of war and peace that Koch won the first great victory against the candidate of the Bosses. The boss, Carmine De Sapio, was a nationally known figure among Democrats and his demise at Koch's hand was a boost to insurgent liberal elements of the party whose effect was felt for years. Koch continued an unbeatable favorite among his constituents in the ensuing years, which brought issue after issue on which they might pronounce themselves with no discord. He opposed the Vietnam war with as much ardor as any of them, and did so early enough in time to pass the most stringent standards of a constituency which saw that plain opposition to the war was not so crucial a measure of a candidate's fitness for Congress as the hour of his opposition. He still shows signs of having knocked about in so hard a school. This year's campaign literature carries the information: "He Fought Against Nixon's War When It Was Still Johnson's War." Some of his constituents are to be seen now, at the end of the war in Vietnam, wearing a button: "Protest Now More than Ever."

The last years have brought an end to the harmony between Koch and some of his old supporters, as the idea of a beleaguered middle class, the problems of scatter-site housing, and crime in the streets became more obviously the issues of the time. He took himself out alone, the first candidate of his political origins to do so, and stood with the residents of Forest Hills who were threatened with a massive low-income project in the midst of one of the few intact Jewish middle-class communities left in the city. Colleagues brooded that he had turned to the Right. When a close political ally —a Jew like himself—called Koch after his stand on Forest Hills to express distress, and to tell him that, whatever the social cost, "the Jews of Forest Hills have to pay their dues," Koch retorted that his caller owned an elegant brownstone and sent his children to private school, and that the Jews of Forest Hills were being asked to pay not only their dues but the dues of people like his caller. He made public his retort. As is the case with all but the most cynical of men, candidate Koch's native inclinations blend reasonably well with the requirements of a stance. Those inclinations currently visible have been helped along by years of association with liberal-Reformers of whose temper his telephone caller on Forest Hills is a fair example. In their company, Koch prospered because he was more stubborn than they, a qualification which could not but have pleased them. Out of their company he prospers, having retained the stubbornness which won a constituency, along with a memory of that constituency and its relation to the world which has sent him willingly into the embrace of its enemies. Nevertheless, he claims to have renounced none of the ties of liberalism, and his behavior is thus well within the bounds of propriety.

A fourth candidate, Jerome Kretchmer, is a product of similar environs in politics. His position is that while he comes from roughly the same liberal constituency as Blumenthal, Badillo, and Koch, he has never paid any attention to ideology. And indeed, his service to that sophisticated political wing of the Democrats which promoted the banning of the H-bomb, and drew up the peace planks, has consisted of appearing at their functions and saying little. He is the sort regularly to be found among the products of a lush political growth, busy in its busyness, a man well rooted in the political climate in which he finds himself and wholly immune to any of its persuasions. He would have operated as well

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under other political flags, among oldline Regulars, Democrats or Republicans, had it been his fate to have to do so. Now he enjoys something of an advantage in a contest where, the contestants understand, the very name of ideology is to be avoided at all costs. For him it is no strain on the truth to look puzzled when ideological questions are put to him by the press. Years of habit at the dais of liberal-Reformers and New Politicians make it possible for him to nod and murmur the word or two which passes for assent among one's kind. Of late he is more given to brusqueness; he deals with practical matters in the city. He was until recently the city's Environmental Protection Administrator, a title comparable in simpler times to the sanitation chief. What with air pollution and consciousness-raising on environmental control, his duties were far more elaborate than those of his predecessors in sanitation. Still, Kretchmer knows the general origins of the job he held, and is not loath to impress upon his audiences the pragmatism which work among the garbage removers exacts from a city official. His position is that he has delivered essential services; all the other candidates can do is talk about it. He is the man of action, they are the debating club. He has decided that he does not have to talk about crime; he knows about garbage, and he knows moreover that of the six or seven other Democrats who have boned up to expertness on crime, not one of them knows a thing about garbage. He has also decided to talk about crookedness in government, which is not, this time, as unprofitable a subject as it was during the Presidential election. As the Watergate fizzle proves, the idea of corruption works on the public mind when there are not more important issues worrying it. But when political fury combines with the notion of crooks in government, as is now the case, the issue of corruption can be devastating, as Kretchmer has not alone begun to note. Though he will not emerge among the front-runners, and may even drop out altogether, Kretchmer's campaign will have told much about the place ideology is thought to occupy in the heart of the electorate today.

But it is Abraham Beame who is the acknowledged front-runner. The city comptroller occupies a special place in the consciousness of the voters as the man they rejected in favor of John Lindsay in 1965, the short, gray-haired accountant who seemed so ill-equipped, comparatively, to ride the waves of the future. Nature's favors have not been transfigured by time; Beame is still short and gray-haired, and gives evidence thus far of profound involvement only in the city's fiscal affairs. Yet, some sturdiness in him speaks to a part of the polity which comes closer to the surface every day. It is, in addition to a wish to have someone tend capably to matters of money, a wish to escape the bonds of passion, to be free both of its ineptitudes and its language, two things of which the new political style has given it an ample taste. These feelings have extended so far among the Democrats of New York as to cause Beame to be regarded as a financial wizard; others see in him that endurance and stability, that consciousness of being a public servant which is now only a memory in politics. It is the post-charisma era insofar as a certain brand of the charismatic is concerned, and Beame is the beneficiary of the times. He is also a remarkably good specimen of the traditional Democratic-party organization. Its loyalties are powerful and enduring among its members, perhaps now more than ever. The traditional Democratic leader is still not apt to look upon labor unions as the enemy of the people, as his opposite number in the New Politics was ever wont to do. In matters relating to style and culture, he is apt to be repelled, rather than impressed, by the evidence of the sexual revolution he sees around him, as he is repelled, rather than impressed, by draft-evaders and by the contempt for America he has seen circulated from universities and convention halls.

Corruption in government is not a new idea to him; fiscal mismanagement, misappropriation of funds, collusion and bribery among city officials are sins for which tradition has prepared certain clear-cut responses: these things are bad to do, not to say get caught at. He is not thus prepared for the corruption in the city's super-agencies, whose pervasiveness is clouded over by a patina of social concern. Beame's associates among the old-line Democrats have always been held by Reformers to be unsavory, back-room types, though he himself is known to be impeccable. In response, he observes: "When a fellow is with you, he's a leader; when he's against you, he's a boss." Leaders or bosses, there are a considerable number of them behind him. He is, like Blumenthal, Koch, and Kretchmer, a Jew. None of them likes to talk of an ethnic vote but he has the best reason. Experience has given him some cause to believe that being a Jew would be of no significant help among Jewish voters; in 1965 Jewish districts went overwhelmingly to his opponent. When he pays any attention to candidates Blumenthal, Badillo, Koch, and Kretchmer, it is largely out of politeness; they, on the other hand, regard his candidacy as the end of their hopes and pay his comings and goings the kind of attention usually reserved for the warder on Death Row.

Beame's nearest contender is thought to be Mario Biaggi, whose support ranges from Center to Right in the political spectrum. He will probably have the endorsement of the Conservative party as well, which has traditionally been something of a handicap in the city, though that

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does not promise to be the case this year. His supporters advertise him to be the most decorated policeman in America. (He has a Jewish counterpart, also a former policeman, president of the city council, Sanford Garelik; because Garelik has virtually no support from any quarter, he is not quite a serious candidate and will probably drop out of the race. Another candidate, Councilman Robert Postel, has similarly slight prospects, though not as slight as those of former Harlem rent-strike leader, Jesse Gray, who has also announced that he is in the running.) Biaggi is, in fact, a Congressman now, like Badillo and Koch, and one whose record is far from that of a conservative. A representative of labor who works on the Congressional labor committee with him can scarcely remember the time when his vote and that of Biaggi have diverged. He has few of the links to the traditional Democratic organization that Beame has. He is, in the language of sociology, a white-ethnic phenomenon, an Italian policeman who rose through the ranks and performed deeds in the line of duty which won him the medal of honor, along with the attention of a New York University law professor who offered him a scholarship to law school. When he graduated he was well into his forties, and from there went on to Congress, to make something of a distinguished service record for himself there. Something in his demeanor spells out a loyalty to his experience which no requirements of a political nature can invent: to the civil service through which he rose, to the law professor who changed his life, to the effrontery with which he performed as a policeman. Though he is the law-and-order candidate to perfection, a certain chic attaches to his candidacy in some liberal circles, notably among journalists. What is left of the year of the ethnic and the hard-hat has accrued with a kind of residual sentimentality to Biaggi, who is agreeable. There are rumors in other circles that he did too much trigger-pulling in the line of duty, though he has several times been cleared of these charges; there are even those who actually believe such rumors will discredit him with the public, but they are few, if hopeful. As for Biaggi's connections to the right-wing, they are so slender that his opponents have taken to reciting his name, as a kind of code word, in the absence of more elaborate charges.

In American politics of the big time the Center usually holds, however often politicians test it; the mayoralty contest gives every sign of following the pattern. This is a condition which must confuse those politicians whose perceptions of the world were forged in the New Politics, by whose sights the Center has always been perceived as the Right. Indeed, the politicians of the Left feel uncomfortable in the Center: it is this discomfort as much as any which denies their vitality this year, when the Center is the place to be. The politician is as unhappy as a man can be who operates under the strain of inhibition. The state of mind of the Left-liberal candidates is therefore not pleasant now, nor is their dilemma surprising. They were the servants of a movement in American politics whose distortions of reality would fall everywhere, and not least on them, by the hand of that patient justice which looks down even on city elections.

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The Achievement of Gershom Scholem

Robert Alter

The cabalist from whom the creature took
Its inspiration called the weird thing Golem—
But all these matters are discussed by Scholem
In a most learned passage in his book.
—J. L. Borges, "The Golem"

I would believe only in a God who could dance.
—Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

"THE desire to destroy," wrote Bakunin, "is also a creative desire," and he managed to inflame—indeed, his ideas still inflame—tens of thousands of minds through his incandescent vision of "the whole of Europe, with St. Petersburg, Paris, and London, transformed into an enormous rubbish-heap." A century before Bakunin, precisely the same ecstatic lust for destruction joined with the same messianic fervor had flared up in the teachings of an obscure Polish Jew named Jacob Frank, though Frank's initial field of reference was theological, not political: "Wherever Adam trod a city was built, but wherever I set foot all will be destroyed, for I came into this world only to destroy and to annihilate. But what I build, will last forever." Bakunin's impact, of course, has been, quite literally, terrific: the Russian anarchist's doctrine has haunted the modern literary imagination and has provided political fanaticism an unfailing source, down to the Bomber Left of our own days, for the dream of redemption through a purifying rite of cataclysmic destruction. Frank, on the other hand, is not likely to have come to the attention of anyone but a serious student of Jewish history, yet this self-chosen messiah of an antinomian sect, both in his psychology and his program of action, offers us, no less than Bakunin, a disturbingly instructive instance of the paradoxes of modernity. Both show us modern man, deformed by his personal and cultural past, in the awful desperation and contradictions of his effort to smash the old molds at whatever cost and create a shining new order.

The juxtaposition of Bakunin and Frank may suggest something of the peculiarity of Gershom Scholem's enterprise as a historian. His work on Jewish mysticism, messianism, and sectarianism, spanning now half a century, constitutes, I should think, one of the major achievements of the historical imagination in our time. I would contend that it is of vital interest not only to anyone concerned with the history of religion but to anyone struggling to understand the underlying problematics of the modern predicament. Yet all along Scholem has been laboring in a forgotten vineyard choked with thorns, a field whose very existence was scarcely recognized before he began his researches in Germany after World War I. The figures he has illuminated—Frank, Sabbatai Zevi, Eleazar of Worms, Abraham Abulafia, Moses de Leon, Isaac Luria—are names virtually unknown outside the orbit of Hebrew culture, and many of the myriad texts he has edited, analyzed, used to reconstruct a vanished past, had been buried in oblivion even within that orbit. Yet Scholem has never exhibited the slightest trace of nervousness about "parochialism" in his chosen specialization. On the contrary, his books and articles are informed by a serene confidence that these are eminently worthy objects of study for anyone curious about man and his culture, and in fact one can think of few more impressive demonstrations that human experience has been more various and devious, more intriguingly complex, than our stubborn stereotypes of it.

GERSHOM SCHOLEM was born in Berlin in 1897, the son of an assimilated bourgeois Jewish family. In his adolescence he became a convinced Zionist, began learning Hebrew, and for this egregious failure in his duties as a patriotic German was peremptorily banished from his father's house. He studied mathematics and physics, then Semitic philology, in Berlin, Jena, and Berne, completing a doctorate at the University of Munich in 1922. A year later he emigrated to Palestine, and from the founding of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1925 until his retirement in 1965 he lectured there on Jewish mysticism, creating a new department as he had virtually created a new field of study, over the years making a deep impact on generations of Israeli students while his reputation among historians of religion steadily grew through his publications in German and English and his frequent visits to American and European institutions of higher learning.

It is symptomatic of the neglect Jewish mysticism had suffered that the first two decades of Scholem's career had to be devoted chiefly to the editing and explication of the basic mystical texts and to compiling bibliographies for the field. His first substantial work of synthesis and historical

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overview is *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (1941),* initially published in English (from a German manuscript version) and based on a series of lectures given in New York in 1938. This "first work," however, is the mature fruit of twenty years of scholarship—an introductory survey that is, in fact, the definitive book on the subject, and gives every prospect of remaining so. Scholem's subsequent books have, then, necessarily been explorations in depth of subjects already covered in single packed chapters in *Major Trends*. In 1948 he published in Hebrew *Reshit Ha-Kabbalah* ("The Origins of the Kabbalah," not available in English), a study of the mystical movement in Provence and Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries that led to the creation of the *Zohar*. In 1957, again in Hebrew, he published his major two-volume biography of the 17th-century pseudo-messiah of Smyrna, Sabbatai Zevi, with extensive consideration of the mass movement inspired by Sabbatai and of Sabbatianism's larger historical reverberations. American readers will soon have an opportunity to examine this work, the most sustained example of Scholem's formidable thoroughness as a historian, with the forthcoming publication in English of *Sabbatai Ṣevi: The Mystical Messiah*.† Both *Major Trends* and *Sabbatai Ṣevi* have become landmarks of modern Jewish scholarship, the one a comprehensive summary and synthesis, the other, at the opposite pole, a study in detail of a particular crucial phenomenon. *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*** (German original, 1960; English, 1965) offers a general description of the phenomenology of Jewish mysticism, explaining the psychological and institutional categories with which it works, the dynamics and tensions peculiar to it as well as those shared with other mystical systems. In 1960 there also appeared his technical study, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*.†† Finally, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (1971)‡ is a generous selection of Scholem's major papers, chiefly from the late 50's and the 60's, again exploring the phenomenology of Jewish mysticism and of Jewish messianism, with particular attention given to Hasidism, to Sabbatianism and its exotic heirs, and to the problematics of tradition in all these currents of Jewish experience.

WHAT, briefly, are the nature and scope of the mystical heritage that Scholem's pioneering work has brought to light? The nine chapters of *Major Trends* firmly delineate the field. I shall return later to Scholem's general definition of mysticism, but for the moment let me suggest that the common tendency of Kabbalism as he sees it is to work feverishly—and unwittingly—against the grain of classical Judaism while adhering passionately to the classical Jewish system of belief. That is, Judaism, as an institutionalized religion, establishes an abyss between man and God, while Jewish mysticism devises strategies for spanning the chasm; classical Judaism is anti-mythological, Kabbalistic theology "attempts to construct and to describe a world in which something of the mythical has again come to life, in terms of thoughts [those of Jewish tradition] which exclude the mythical element"; conversely, the biblical faith conceives of revelation as the direct utterance of a personal God, while Kabbalism is heavily influenced by gnostic conceptions of an impersonal divine reality of which God the Creator who addresses man is merely an intermediary manifestation. Many of these tendencies are common to other mysticisms, but the Kabbalists put a very special stress on the eschatalogical impulse implicit in much mystical thought, and they are distinctive in their central notion of language as a profound reflection of ultimate spiritual reality, in their concomitant devotion to exegesis as a mystical activity, in their extravagant claims for the authority of the very tradition they radically reshape, and in the special status of their teaching among mystical legacies as "a masculine doctrine, made for men and by men."

The historical phenomenon of Jewish mysticism as Scholem traces it in *Major Trends* stretches from esoteric doctrine taught in Pharisaic circles in the days of the Second Temple down to the Hasidic movement that flourished in Eastern Europe during the later 18th and 19th centuries. The earliest recoverable phase is Merkabah (Divine Chariot or Throne) mysticism, a gnostic tradition rooted in Hellenistic thought. Its literary remains, scattered over most of the first millennium C. E., are peculiarly not speculative but descriptive—of the glittering reality imaged in the Divine Throne or the Divine Palaces (*Hekhalot*). Accordingly, the Merkabah mystics are pervasively conscious of God's otherness, even in mystical ecstasy; their vision fixed on the radiance of the Godhead, they exhibit little interest in man or in the moral dimension of spiritual life. The next major mystical movement, the Hasidism of 12th- and 13th-century Germany, in some ways moves to the opposite pole, being less concerned with the mysteries of the Godhead than with man's acts, and assuming a deeply pietistic, penitential, ascetic, and often thaumaturgic character.

The most brilliant development of Jewish mysticism comes with the emergence of the Kabbalah proper in southern France and in Spain around the year 1200. Scholem distinguishes two strands of Kabbalah, ecstatic and theosophical. The for-

* Schocken (3rd revised edition, 1961), 460 pp., $7.50 ($2.95 paper).

† Princeton University Press, 2 vols.; the work, a revised and updated version of the 1957 original, is scheduled to appear in early summer. The translation by R. W. Zwi Werblowsky is admirable.

** Schocken, 216 pp., $7.50 ($1.95 paper).

†† Bloch (2nd edition, 1965), 136 pp., $7.50.

‡ Schocken, 376 pp., $15.00 ($3.95 paper).

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mer, dominated by the figure of Abraham Abulafia (b. 1240), involves an elaborate system of meditation (especially on the letters of the Hebrew alphabet) and even breathing exercises which are reminiscent of yoga and which may ultimately derive from the same Indian source as yoga. It was the theosophical strand, however, which was to be the more influential, receiving its supreme expression in the *Zohar*, or Book of Splendor, composed, as Scholem has conclusively demonstrated, by a Spanish Jew named Moses de Leon toward the end of the 13th century. The intricacies of its doctrine of the Godhead defy brief summary,* but the haunting imaginative power of Moses de Leon's literary mélange—"a mixture of theosophic theology, mythical cosmogony, and mystical psychology and anthropology"—proved to be of vital historical importance. Through this remarkable power, the book quickly attained immense popularity, indeed, became the only text after the Talmud to achieve the rough Jewish equivalent of canonical status. It was the basis for the last major theoretical development of Jewish mysticism, the Lurianic Kabbalah that arose in Safed in the early 16th century. Isaac Luria and his disciples placed a new central emphasis on cosmogony, conceived creation as a breaking of divine vessels, an emanation of divine light, sparks of divine essence entrammeled in husks of evil from which they must be redeemed. In short, the Lurianic doctrine elevated Exile to a powerfully dramatic principle of cosmic process; it represented a boldly original mystical theology that was also ideally suited to the propaganda of mass movements of spiritual revival. Like the *Zohar* itself, Lurianic teaching was taken up enthusiastically by most segments of the Jewish people, all over the Diaspora. Finally, Lurianism provided the ideological apparatus for two successive movements which shook the structure of traditional Jewish society—the mystical heresy of Sabbatianism that enveloped most of the Jewish world around the year 1666, and Hasidism, the popular mystical movement stirred by charismatic leaders that sprang up in Podolia and Volhynia nearly a century later and profoundly affected East European Jewry at the dawn of the modern period.

Now, Scholem's work is clearly of far more than antiquarian interest, but it is important first to recognize his enormous value as a sheer archaeologist of culture, digging tirelessly through vast moldering mounds of literary remains neglected for the most part by others. He has, ultimately, a definite interpretative view and a clear commitment to certain values, but his work cannot be faulted for tendentiousness because it is based on such painstaking research, always intent on determining the precise and particular facts no matter how much they may upset anyone's established views, including his own. His biography of Sabbatai Zevi is surely a model for the patient reconstruction of a life and a movement (three centuries distant) from all the available sources, and at the same time an instance of revisionist historiography at its most acute. Scholem has rare gifts for synthesis and generalization, as several of his more recent essays on Jewish messianism and tradition demonstrate,† but his mind is equally remarkable for the way it adheres to the smallest particles of particular historical experience.

One sees this faculty operating on a small scale with dazzling effect in the essay on the history of the Star of David as a symbol, included in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*.** Scholem discards a series of old chestnuts, follows the forerunners and occasional occurrences of the device through some twenty-five-hundred years of iconography, necromancy, and occult symbolism, distinguishing its shifting and overlapping uses until its final adoption in 19th-century Germany as a "Jewish" symbol that could be for German citizens of the Mosaic persuasion completely analogous to the cross for Christians. The sifting of texts and facts concludes with a wryly pointed observation: "Just at the time of its greatest dissemination in the 19th century the Shield of David served as the empty symbol of a Judaism which itself was more and more falling into meaninglessness." This sort of essay, one assumes, is a relatively easy spin-off project for a scholar like Scholem, but precisely because it seems so unlike labored scholarship I find the experience of reading it a little dizzying, for the mind that has made it is able to contain in lucid simultaneity such a welter of disparate, far-flung fragments of the lived past. Islamic amulets and Christian manuals of sorcery, alchemical handbooks from the early Middle Ages to the late Renaissance, Kabbalistic tracts from everywhere; the politics, ritual practices, art, and folkways of Christians and Jews in 13th-century Anagni, 15th-century Prague, 16th-century Budapest, 17th-century Vienna—all these give the impression of having been not merely surveyed but somehow securely *possessed* in all their concrete particularity. Reading such a historical essay, one is forced to revise one's limited notions of what knowledge can be.

To contain so many materials is a capacity of mind; to possess them is a quality of imagination, and it is this that makes a serious technical scholar like Scholem also a writer of compelling general interest. He writes always with respect for the integrity of his subjects, even those that previously have been considered marginal or "pathological,"

* The interested reader may peruse the suggestive sampling put together by Scholem in *Zohar: The Book of Splendor*, Schocken (1963), 124 pp., $1.75.

† See *The Messidnic Idea in Judaism*, especially the first three essays and the brilliant "Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism."

** This essay, "The Curious History of the Six-Pointed Star," originally appeared in COMMENTARY, September 1949.

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and so he can enter into them empathetically at the same time as he views them analytically in historical context. One vivid case in point is his commentary on the hymns of the *Hekhalot* mystics in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*: "The immense solemnity of their style, the bombast of their magnificent phrases, reflect the fundamental paradox of these hymns: the climax of sublimity and solemnity to which the mystic can attain in his attempt to express the magnificence of his vision is also the *ne plus ultra* of vacuousness." One might note that "paradox" is one of Scholem's favorite words, and few scholars have had such a deep understanding of how sickness and health, destruction and creation, nonsense and profundity, have intermingled in the same spiritual phenomena. "Vacuousness," in context, is not so damning as it may sound here since it has a precise theosophic referent and hence a definite psychological function. In any case, Jews familiar from the liturgy with repetitious acrostic hymns like *Ha-Aderet v'Ha-Emunah* will be startled to learn that these poems were composed to serve a hallucinogenic function for their original users in the early centuries of the Christian era. Scholem makes this clear without resorting to clinical vocabulary, illuminating the experience he describes as if from within while analyzing it from without:

> Almost all the hymns from the *Hekhalot* tracts . . . reveal a mechanism comparable to the motion of an enormous fly-wheel. In cyclical rhythm the hymns succeed each other, and within them the adjurations of God follow in a crescendo of glittering and majestic attributes, each stressing and reinforcing the sonorous power of the word. The monotony of their rhythm—almost all consist of verses of four words—and the progressively sonorous incantations induce in those who are praying a state of mind bordering on ecstasy.

SCHOLEM'S endowments as a historian can hardly be in question, but that is not to say that he has not had his detractors in the world of Jewish scholarship, who have generally acknowledged his gifts while arguing that he has used them for dubious, if not nefarious, ends. It is the general orientation of his enterprise that has laid him open to attack, and that needs some setting in perspective. Modern academic historiography was invented as a serious discipline in early 19th-century Germany, and modern Jewish historical scholarship developed very soon thereafter in the same cultural sphere, using the same intellectual tools. There was, however, an important ideological disparity between the two scholarly movements, as Scholem pointed out in a 1959 lecture at the Leo Baeck Institute on the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, or Science of Judaism. The early generations of German historians, inspired by the ideals of German Romanticism, were nationalists, and what they sought was an "active comprehension of the organism of their own history in the sense of a positive, nationally oriented perspective and future." The proponents of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, on the other hand, were at bottom cosmopolitan in outlook, perhaps, indeed, the most dogged heirs of the already fading cosmopolitan vision of the Enlightenment. Though their subject was the national experience of one people, their standpoint was as men of a larger European culture in which an experience so fiercely particular, so redolent of other times and places, could only be an anachronism; and so they often tended to study Judaism as the dead remains of a completed past, not as a living body pregnant with the future. Gerson D. Cohen has recently proposed that Scholem be viewed as a neo-Romantic historian,* and in fact the brief notation I have quoted on the Romantic quest for an organism of national history and a perspective on a national future could well be taken as the thumbnail program of Scholem's own enterprise. If, however, that enterprise can in one aspect be described as Romantic, it is a hard-headed, shrewdly skeptical Romanticism, and a Romanticism, as we shall see, steeped in the bitter juices of modern experience, impelled by the concerns of a characteristically modern imagination.

The founders of Jewish historical scholarship, I would add, were motivated not only by the ideology of an intellectual movement but at least as much by the vulnerable sensibility of a new social class. Only a generation or two beyond the ghetto, in an era when assimilation was a beckoning horizon, they sought to confirm in their study of Judaism the values of propriety, prudence, practical reasonableness, and rational faith on which their newly acquired German *Bürgerlichkeit* rested. When Scholem observes that "their bias represents a form of censorship of the Jewish past," thinking chiefly of a post-Enlightenment ideological bias, one could also note that this bias is equally composed of a bourgeois recoil from all that might offend a sense of decency in "good" society. Thus, the *Wissenschaft* scholars developed a peculiar notion of what came to be known as normative Judaism. What was central to Jewish experience tended to be thought of as legalistic, rationalist, prudential, this-worldly, and fundamentally conservative; spiritual phenomena sharply diverging from this general norm had to be viewed as suspect aberrations. In this manner, Jewish mysticism, Jewish enthusiastic and antinomian movements, the profound involvement of Jews through the ages in magic and the occult, all were studied grudgingly as manifestations of the sickly medieval spirit that temporarily beclouded the clarity of

* Annual Roland Lecture in Jewish Studies, Stanford University, May 1972.

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Jewish devotion to eternal verities and rational ideals.*

Scholem's work, then, might helpfully be viewed as a sustained act of social rebellion, somewhat like the rebellion of the Nietzschean movement of early 20th-century Hebrew poets and writers to which it is closely allied.† One might almost say that he has uncovered for moderns the heritage of a historical Jewish counter-culture, except for the fact that, as his investigations have proven, it was very often the dominant culture. In any case, he has managed to rescue from the murk of the past a rich body of vitally Jewish experience that challenges many of the comfortable values of German middle-class respectability in which the Science of Judaism developed and in which he himself grew up. His writing, in other words, has been not only a decisive revocation of that censorship of the Jewish past which he mentions but also a deftly wielded weapon, for all its heavy apparatus of scholarly footnotes, used to *épater les bourgeois*.

Although Scholem's influence in the world of Jewish scholarship has been enormous, the inertia of established views he has had to overcome has also been considerable. The fact that he is not merely fencing with 19th-century ghosts in his historical revisionism was recently made strikingly clear in a review-essay of *The Messianic Idea* by Jacob Agus in *Judaism* (Summer 1972). Agus is a man of serious Jewish knowledge, a prolific writer on theological matters, and, preeminently, a figure of the American rabbinical establishment—which, as it turns out, is in some matters not so unlike the old German-Jewish bourgeois establishment as one would like to think. Agus has, to be sure, the highest praise for the scope and intelligence of Scholem's undertaking, but the ease with which in the very act of praise he closes his mind to the major conclusions of Scholem's researches is quite breathtaking. Thus, Scholem's studies of Sabbatai Zevi, both in the two-volume biography and in a series of scholarly articles early and late, have forcefully demonstrated that, contrary to 19th-century views, the Sabbatian messianic movement of the 1660's had immense reverberations, at its peak enveloping most of the Jewish people in all the far reaches of the Diaspora, and continuing as a highly ramified and active underground for nearly a century and a half. Scholem in effect sets Sabbatianism at the beginning of modern Jewish history, as the first concretely realized historical moment when the whole Jewish people experienced its own incipient emergence from the ghetto world into a radically transformed existence. A world thrown so violently askew would for many never resume its old balance. Though the exact role of Sabbatianism as a causal factor in the various movements that followed it is still open to debate, Scholem has unearthed a current of Sabbatianism (there were good reasons why the participants themselves should have kept it hidden) running through the rabbinical leadership for a century after the death of the apostate messiah, feeding into Hasidism, the Hebrew Enlightenment, the Reform movement, even the French Revolution.

With all this, Agus, after reading, we can assume, Scholem's thousand pages of carefully documented argument, can still blandly assert—revealingly, in a "word of caution" to the reader unversed in Jewish sources—that "one must see the Sabbatian eruption in perspective, as a marginal aberration." It is true, he concedes, that the movement briefly swept the whole people and that the energies of its aftermath were not quickly spent, "But the intellectual leaders of the people, in spite of their anguished situation, quickly regained their equilibrium." No evidence at all is offered for this flat assertion. Apparently, it is sufficient simply to see things "in perspective," and a rabbi's commitment to reasonable faith is taken to be a self-validating measure of what really happened in Jewish history.

As a historian, Scholem is a modernist in much the same sense that Conrad, Kafka, Mann, and Faulkner are modernists. Like these imaginative writers, his insights are often deeply troubling, and it is the business of an establishment figure like Agus to blunt or deflect such an argument wherever it is most probing. But it may be helpful to consider in detail how Scholem is a modernist both in his choice of subject and in the qualities of imagination he brings to bear on it. What, to begin with, is the peculiar appeal of mysticism to a writer whose work begins in the very peak years of European literary modernism, whose mature life has witnessed two world wars, the Holocaust, and the bloody rebirth after two millennia of a Jewish commonwealth? Mysticism, Scholem states at the outset of *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, approvingly quoting Rufus Jones, "is religion in its most acute, intense, and living stage." Clearly, acuteness, intensity, and vitality have been among the great desiderata of the modern spirit in its quest for personal authenticity against what has often seemed the dead

* In a personal reminiscence published in Hebrew Scholem tells a revealing anecdote of his own early confrontation with the Science of Judaism. As a very young man in Germany, he was introduced to an elderly Reform rabbi who was a student of Heinrich Graetz, the major synoptic historian of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. This rabbi was reputed to be the only *Wissenschaft* scholar interested in the Kabbalah. It turned out that in fact he had a splendid private collection of Kabbalistic manuscripts and rare editions. "How marvelous, sir," cried the enthusiastic young Scholem, "that you have been able to read and study these sources." To which the old man replied: *"Was? Den Quatsch soll ich auch noch lesen?* (What? Am I expected to *read* this nonsense also?)" Scholem concludes: "At that moment my eyes were opened and I realized what the Science of Judaism was all about." (*Molad*, no. 164-165 [1962], p. 135.)

† I have elaborated on this link in "Sabbatai Zevi and the Modern Imagination," COMMENTARY, June 1967.

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and empty formalism of the cultural heritage. The specific meaning of these three qualities as they are associated with mysticism is worth pursuing. I think that implicit in all of Scholem's work is an assumption that mysticism is, finally, the most authentic variety of religious experience because it is the most daring, aspiring to a naked directness of confrontation with divinity, seeking to break through the intervening barriers of institutionalization and received tradition.

Along with the definition of Rufus Jones, Scholem cites Aquinas's characterization of mysticism as *cognitio dei experimentalis,* the experiential knowledge of God. Elsewhere, in his masterful essay on revelation and tradition, he emphasizes the mediated nature for rabbinic Judaism of every experience after the initial revelation. As a result, exegesis becomes the characteristically Jewish means to knowledge and perhaps even the characteristically Jewish mode of religious experience. What the Kabbalists, with their letter-and-word mysticism, sought was to get back through exegesis to a species of revelation, to work or contemplate their way through the mediating words of the sacred text to the unmediated Word out of whose infinite declensions and permutations all language and all being come into existence. The Kabbalah is fundamentally a linguistic mysticism, at least in method, and this is surely part of its fascination for Scholem, who shares with his friend Walter Benjamin an abiding interest in the paradoxical ways language, as civilization's endlessly refined and conventionalized instrument, can put man in touch with the potent wellsprings of ultimacy that underlie and antedate all civilization.

Scholem is, of course, equally concerned with how mysticism fits into, or obtrudes from, particular historical contexts, and in this regard his generalization on the relation between mysticism and history in *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism* throws a good deal of light on his interest in the subject as a modern: "Mysticism as a historical phenomenon is a product of crises." His inquiries have shown how Jewish mysticism responded to the most terrible historical traumas with apocalyptic systems that renewed the hope of redemption and sustained the life of tradition. To cite the major instance of recent centuries: the Kabbalah, crystallized in late 13th-century Spain, provided the vocabulary of spiritual explanation for the banishment of 1492, was then articulated as a general doctrine of cosmic redemption by the Lurianic school in 16th-century Palestine, and in its subsequent dissemination decisively shaped minds and offered the ideological tools for the great messianic upheaval of the 17th century. It will be apparent even from this hasty sketch that Scholem conceives mysticism not only as the product of historical crisis but as an active force generating further crisis. The Lurianic doctrine of cosmic exile, developed among the refugees from Spain in the decades after the expulsion, did not encourage the exiles to accommodate themselves to their harsh circumstances. On the contrary, "The emotions aroused by these sufferings were not soothed and tranquilized, but stimulated and whipped up."

Though he is not merely a historian of ideas, Scholem writes with a profound respect for the autonomy of the spiritual realm in historical experience, and though he exercises a fine awareness of contexts, he emphatically rejects the "modern naiveté" of sociological or psychological determinism, with its roots in the simplistic positivism of 19th-century science. Thus, the actual social composition of the Sabbatian movement makes it quite impossible to reduce it to a rebellion of disadvantaged classes; the movement's special appeal to the most prosperous and legally liberated centers of 17th-century Jewry preclude explaining it simply as a response to the persecutions of the period; and even Sabbatai Zevi's manic-depressive psychosis, discussed at great length, does not diminish the power and complexity of the theology built around his personality. "If there was one general factor underlying the patent unity of the Sabbatian movement everywhere, then this factor was essentially religious and as such obeyed its own autonomous laws."

WHAT is it about mysticism that makes it the most appropriate religious response to historical crisis? To begin with, as Scholem points out in a variety of ways, there is a constant tension in mysticism, precisely because it is a *cognitio dei experimentalis,* between imperative personal experience and the religion of fixed norms outside the experiencing self. When a historical crisis occurs, the contradictions within the body of tradition are made manifest, and the new discoveries of a daring self avid for intensities come into the foreground of theological explanation, helping to reconcile the promises of tradition with the sharp disappointments of history. Mysticism, to invoke another of Scholem's favorite words, is by its very nature dialectical, continuously mediating between the absoluteness of the self and the inviolability of tradition, and as such it is ideally suited to coping with a historical reality that vacillates between opposite poles, violently overturning preconceptions and expectations. The Sabbatians after the apostasy of their messiah constitute an extreme case in which "all reality became dialectically unreal and contradictory," but such radical confusions have in one way or another challenged most mystical movements, just as again and again they seem to have engulfed historical experience in our own century.

The fitting response to this kind of traumatic and contradictory historical reality was a religion of extremes, and here again Scholem's explorations of Jewish mysticism jibe with a deep-seated conviction of modernism, that the truth is to be sought in extremes, the historical Judaism revealed in his work being distinctly a Judaism for

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the readers of Dostoevsky, Kafka, and Rimbaud. Looking back over Scholem's *oeuvre,* one sees a crowd of sharp visual images that forever unsettle one's complacent assumptions about what Jews may have done or been: the early Hasidic ascetics of 13th-century Germany, plunging themselves into snow and ice, exposing their bodies in summer to ants and bees; the Jewish women and children of Safed, Aleppo, Smyrna, writhing in prophetic paroxysms, reciting verses in automatic speech, flung to the ground in a self-induced hypnotic trance at the advent of Sabbatai Zevi; the bizarre psychosexuality of Sabbatai himself, who devised weirdly erotic rites, such as a marriage ceremony between himself and the Torah, while his first two flesh-and-blood marriages were unconsummated and the third was to a woman whose promiscuity was notorious in the Jewish world from Amsterdam to Cairo; the orgiastic cult of the Frankists in Poland, or of their Turkish counterpart, the crypto-Jewish Dönmeh sect, which celebrated a spring festival of ritual fornication unwittingly drawing on the old worship of the Magna Mater indigenous to Asia Minor.

Scholem treats all this with the utmost seriousness, fitting it into a large imaginative perspective of interpretation. Here, there is a third key term, in addition to "paradox" and "dialectic," which he invokes again and again. If the two already mentioned terms describe both historical process and the nature of deity, the third term, "abyss," does that and more, representing in an image a kind of ultimate principle of ontology in Scholem's vision of the world. Thus, Jewish mysticism in general attempts "to make visible that abyss in which the symbolic nature of all that exists reveals itself." Sabbatianism and its sundry offshoots are repeatedly described as opening an abyss at the very heart of Judaism. The implicit logic of messianism itself, once it becomes a real operative force in history, is to thrust toward a hitherto sealed abyss of chaotic possibilities: "Every acute and radical messianism that is taken seriously tears open an abyss in which by inner necessity antinomian tendencies and libertine moral conceptions gain strength." Franz Rosenzweig, as the most probing of modern Jewish theologians, is said to have "ripped open the abyss in which the substance of Judaism lies hidden." (True knowledge for Scholem often turns out to be forbidden knowledge.) The apocalyptic element in Rosenzweig's thought "provided a recognition of the catastrophic potential of all historical order in an unredeemed world." Even the legend of the Thirty-Six Hidden Just Men is characterized, perhaps a bit gratuitously, as being sustained by a "somewhat anarchic morality" because it confronts us with the idea that "we can never fathom" the nature of our neighbors. The mystic, Scholem tells us at the beginning of *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism,* wants to encounter "Life" (the quotation marks are his); but this primordial Life, ceaselessly engendering and annihilating form, "is the anarchic promiscuity of all living things. Into this bubbling cauldron, this continuum of destruction, the mystic plunges."

Scholem generally avoids psychoanalytic vocabulary—because, I think, it might seem clinically reductive in its application to phenomena that above all need rescuing from the contempt of the learned—but it is hard to escape the parallel between his notion of an abyss upon which the lid of civilization sits precariously and Freud's view of culture in *Civilization and Its Discontents.* In any case, the abyss for Scholem seems to be not just the function of pent-up psychological forces but also the substantive nature of reality outside the human psyche, and here a more apposite source for his vision could well be the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy.* Nietzsche's notion of a Dionysian truth in excess, of contradiction at the heart of nature; his guiding concept of a dangerous dialectical tension between the Apollonian love of form and order and the Dionysian impulse to orgiastic release, to fusion with the inhuman chaotic potency that underlies existing things—all these have their parallels in Scholem. Even Nietzsche's contempt for the self-deceiving optimism of Socratic culture (essentially, 19th-century German academic culture) with its anti-mystical bias has its analogue in Scholem's rebellion, less visionary, more grounded in an exacting intellectual discipline than Nietzsche's, against the bias and tacit censorship of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums.* Finally, that abyss of formlessness from which culture arises implies the necessity of myth for Nietzsche: only through myth can man remain in touch with the realm of the irrational that is the matrix of reality and also give it an imaged order, a sequence of dramatic actions, which can be grasped by a finite human consciousness. "Without myth," Nietzsche asserts, "every culture loses the healthy natural power of its creativity: only a horizon defined by myths completes and unifies a whole cultural movement."

Now, myth has always been a problematic phenomenon for Judaism. One might well say, as the late Yehezkel Kaufmann repeatedly argued, that the whole tendency of biblical monotheism was to conduct a systematic purge of myth, leaving only a few vestigial literary allusions whose original meanings were no longer even understood. The need for myth, however, might be driven underground but could not be entirely extinguished. Scholem quite candidly describes the Kabbalah in the opening chapter of *Major Trends* as a "revival of myth" from the innermost recesses of historical Judaism, and it is clear that he shares the modern fascination with myth that begins signally in *The Birth of Tragedy* and flowers in some of the major imaginative works of the earlier 20th century. His exemplary exposition of the theosophic doctrine of the *Zohar* excites the imagination as it does largely because he perceives so surely the resurgence of old mythological images in the new mysti-

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cal lore, male and female gods coupling in cosmic exultation, confirming the unity of the world and the eternal meaning of transient human life through the power of their divine sexuality.

Scholem, let me stress, is a student of mysticism, not a mystagogue, and he has none of that peculiar nostalgia for primal mud that has characterized many latter-day myth-mongers. He lucidly recognizes that the Celestial Bridegroom and the Celestial Bride of the *Zohar* are only a step and a half away from the pagan excesses of the Dönmeh sect adoring a mother goddess in orgies. For all his interest in antinomian extremes, Scholem is committed to civilized restraints and to the values and ordered achievements that can be realized within those restraints. Nevertheless, his entire study of Jewish mysticism implicitly argues that a spiritual tradition entirely cut off from myth is cut off from living connection with ultimate reality and so doomed to wither.

I HOPE the foregoing will suggest something of the range of implication in the qualities of acuteness and intensity that Scholem associates with mysticism. The third of Rufus Jones's intertwined categories, vitality ("religion in its most . . . living stage"), calls for further commentary because it bears a rather special relationship to Scholem's Zionist commitment. He is perfectly open about the nature of that commitment in the brief Foreword to *The Messianic Idea*. The essays are addressed, he tells us, not to dilettantes but to people with a passionate interest in Judaism and its past; moreover, "This book is written by a man who believes Judaism to be a living phenomenon which . . . has not yet exhausted its possibilities" and whose future forms one cannot presume to predict.

Scholem's primary period of research is precisely the era of Jewish history considered in many older views to be a period of decadence after the peak achievements of the Bible, the Talmud, the Spanish philosophers and poets. In this era, running from the later Middle Ages to the threshold of modernity, he discovers a mysticism richly developing until it becomes the dominant force in the Jewish people, manifesting great spiritual boldness, intellectual subtlety, and an unflagging sense of national vigor in the most dire historical circumstances. At the core of the Kabbalah, especially as it received its definitive formulation in the school of Isaac Luria, "lay a great image of rebirth," and what is especially remarkable about this image of rebirth is that it remained strongly particularist in its Jewishness while at the same time achieving an embracing universalism of outlook, erecting a splendid cosmogony out of the historical experience of the Jews. "Kabbalistic myth had 'meaning,' because it sprang from a fully conscious relation to a reality which, experienced symbolically even in its horror, was able to project mighty symbols of Jewish life as an extreme case of human life pure and simple."

This understanding of the Kabbalah offers a new perspective on the rise of modern Jewish nationalism. Zionism may be seen not as an act of historical desperation, the implicit admission of what Georges Friedmann has called "the end of the Jewish people," but, on the contrary, the last of the great visions of rebirth that began driving the Jews toward new horizons some six centuries before Herzl, a movement not only stimulated from without but animated from within by a deep source of national vitality. (It might be noted that the organic conception of national history mentioned by Scholem in connection with the German Romantics is in fact his own implicit view of Jewish history.) In the model of the Lurianic Kabbalah, moreover, one glimpses the possibility that the reborn Jewish state may somehow amplify its nationalism with the universalist vision of Jewish tradition and not subside into being a Bulgaria of the Middle East. These historical precedents of national renascence are all the more convincing because they are not presented tendentiously: Scholem is careful not to interpret the messianic or mystical movements as "proto-Zionist" in any simplistic sense; he in fact argues at length that Hasidism through its stress on the goal of ecstatic communion (*d'vekut*) aimed at a "neutralization" of messianism after the great Sabbatian outburst; and in his studies of the antinomian movements he is sharply conscious of the fact that the other face of the coin of redemption is destruction.

The dialectical play, however, between redemption and destruction is intimately associated with the vitality Scholem attributes to the Kabbalah. Seeing in the regnant rabbinic tradition during this period an acquiescence in the passivity and abjectness of Exile, an increasingly arid—perhaps one might say, bourgeois—religion estranged from the sources of living religious experience, he writes out of the ultimate conviction that rebellion was a historical necessity, though he knows that the aftermath of any rebellion may be chaos. This is one reason why he is so deeply fascinated by the Sabbatian movement, for the Sabbatians destroyed the world of rabbinic Judaism from within while remaining thoroughly Jewish in their consciousness. They were, as Scholem puts it in his classic essay, "Redemption through Sin,"* "revolutionaries who regarded themselves as loyal Jews while at the same time completely overturning the traditional religious categories of Judaism." There is surely a good deal of enthusiastic empathy with the Sabbatian rebellion in Scholem's studies of it—one is struck, for example, by his vivid description of a contemporary portrait of Jacob Sasportas, the arch-opponent of the Sabbatians, showing "the

* This essay, published in COMMENTARY in January 1971, under the title "The Holiness of Sin," appears in the collection *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*.

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face of a Jewish Grand Inquisitor," dour, stern, harsh, irascible, arrogant. One should add, however, that this imaginative identification with the rebels does not dim Scholem's perception of the pathological elements among them, the reign of terror (the phrase is his) they imposed during the months of their total ascendancy, and the ultimate futility of their rebellion.

IN ANY CASE, what emerges from the multifarious mystical matters discussed by Scholem is a powerful sense of the protean nature of Jewish experience. Where we might have been inclined to view the various modern ideologies of Jewish survival as a splintering of classical Jewish unity, a fateful breaking away from the grand continuity of the Jewish past, Scholem shows us a historical Judaism itself fissured with sharp divisions and marked by the most extreme variety. Halfway through the first volume of *Sabbatai Ṣevi,* he makes explicit this large implication of his work: "There is no way of telling *a priori* what beliefs are possible or impossible within the framework of Judaism. . . . The 'Jewishness' in the religiosity of any particular period is not measured by dogmatic criteria that are unrelated to actual historical circumstances, but solely by what sincere Jews do, in fact, believe, or—at least—consider to be legitimate possibilities." This will obviously not sit well with contemporary Jewish dogmatists, spokesmen for the various rabbinical, communal, and Zionist establishments or for ideologized notions of the Jew as enlightened internationalist, but the mass of historical evidence Scholem marshals to support his assertion is formidable. His stress on the vital Jewish consciousness of the pseudo-messianic movements has been attacked as a spurious partisan attempt to validate secular Zionism in terms of Jewish history, but the real point about Scholem's work is that it is post-ideological. Though he is personally committed to the Zionist renascence, what his researches actually do is to open the doors of the mind to a genuine Jewish pluralism, grounded in the spectacular plurality of Jewish historical experience.

Scholem has the kind of ironic intelligence that delights in contradictions, that can hold the multiple attributes of the subjects it scrutinizes in clear simultaneous view, and that is even capable on occasion of a certain teasing archness, for all its scholarly gravity. (The whimsical tone of Borges's poetic allusion to Scholem is not really inappropriate.) As a result, his account of the Jewish past can accommodate the full power of its most seemingly alien manifestations while seeing in overview the distinct limitations of their historical field of operation. Similarly, he can affirm the revolutionary significance in Jewish history of the Zionist fulfillment with an acute awareness of its looming ambiguities. This rare amplitude of perception is beautifully evidenced in the lead essay of *The Messianic Idea in Judaism.* I would like to conclude by quoting an extended passage from this essay because it illustrates so finely Scholem's incisive critical perspective on the very past whose pulsating life stirs his imagination, and shows how his involvement in the past is intellectually linked with a deep concern for the complexities of history unfolding in the present. Celebrations of the noble impulse of Jewish messianism past and present are the great cliché of modern Jewish intellectuals, no matter how distant they may be from any connection with historical Judaism. Scholem, who knows the messianic phenomenon and has appreciated its distinctive power from the most intimate familiarity with all its manifestations, is able to penetrate beyond the banalities of the apologists to the profound historical contradictions at the root of the messianic idea.

> The magnitude of the messianic idea corresponds to the endless powerlessness in Jewish history during all the centuries of exile, when it was unprepared to come forward onto the plane of world history. There's something preliminary, something provisional about Jewish history, hence its inability to give of itself entirely. For the messianic idea is not only consolation and hope. Every attempt to realize it tears open the abysses [again, the key phrase] which lead each of its manifestations *ad absurdum.* There is something grand about living in hope, but at the same time there is something profoundly unreal about it. . . . Thus in Judaism the messianic idea has compelled a *life lived in deferment,* in which nothing can be done definitively, nothing can be irrevocably accomplished. One may say, perhaps, the messianic idea is the real anti-existentialist idea. Precisely understood, there is nothing concrete which can be accomplished by the unredeemed. . . . The blazing landscape of redemption (as if it were a point of focus) has concentrated in itself the historical outlook of Judaism. Little wonder that overtones of messianism have accompanied the modern Jewish readiness for irrevocable action in the concrete realm, when it set out on the utopian return to Zion. It is a readiness which no longer allows itself to be fed on hopes. Born out of the horror and destruction that was Jewish history in our generation, it is bound to history itself and not to meta-history; it has not given itself up totally to messianism. Whether or not Jewish history will be able to endure this entry into the concrete realm without perishing in the crisis of the messianic claim which has virtually been conjured up—that is the question which out of his great and dangerous past the Jew of this age poses to his present and to his future.

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Observations

Our (English) Crowd

Chaim Raphael

ANYTHING "Our Crowd" can do, we—"The Cousinhood" of England—can do better: or so Chaim Bermant might seem to be saying in his highly entertaining study of seven enormously wealthy and interconnected Jewish families that rose to dizzy heights of fame and influence in 19th-century Britain.* In fact, however, Mr. Bermant's book is vastly—and significantly—different in range and style from Stephen Birmingham's study of the German-Jewish aristocracy in America.

Superficially the subject matter and method of approach of both books seem identical. In each country—the U.S. and Britain—a few Jewish immigrants arrive, move swiftly from trading into finance, and in no time at all—partly because of dynastic intermarriages—are fabulous powers in the City, launching vast issues, opening up new countries, amassing great fortunes, acquiring huge estates. Behind it, there is a specifically Jewish drama. Mighty as these rich families become, they are still *arrivistes,* fighting for full acceptance by the Gentile world. At the same time, as they struggle for a new image, they are restrained by a strong sense of loyalty (in varying degrees) toward the Jewish background from which they have emerged. It is a dilemma never fully resolved, with a paradox as epilogue. In the ordinary course of events, there would have been an inevitable one-way seepage of Jewish identity: and this to a great extent happened. The old simple meanings attached to being Jewish could never fully survive such astonishing changes in social position as occurred. Yet when everything might have disappeared, the sense of being Jewish came back into its own, with a new élan, through the emergence of the state of Israel. Peoplehood over there—supported with true enthusiasm—became a safe and satisfying surrogate for an otherwise unconvincing kind of Jewish identity over here.

The family banners are still flying, therefore; yet there is a sense of epitaph about both stories. They cover a period of transition now over, unique in its vast opportunities for profit in financing industrial revolution, and unique also in its coinciding with the major experience of Jewish emancipation. A special aura clings to these families, the tiny few who were wealthy and free, revered (and resented) by the untold millions still caught in poverty and repression. The great fortunes that emerged subsequently among other Jews, and the powerful leadership which took over as the princely families gave way, can never generate the same interest, because the new wealth is so much more diffused. The tightly-knit sense of aristocracy and privilege, with its duties and eccentricities, has vanished forever.

In this broad sense, the two books cover the same ground, and the characters, of course, sometimes overlap. But the difference in locale is fundamental. One might have thought that the two essential strands of the stories—money and Jews—operate so similarly in different countries that this would outweigh national differences. In fact, the interest of each book lies precisely in the distinct flavor of its national setting.

The innumerable readers of *Our*

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* *The Cousinhood,* by Chaim Bermant, Macmillan, 466 pp., $10.95.

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Crowd know how essential this was to one's enjoyment. "Only in America . . . ," one felt. In this place, and at this time, some extraordinary force emerged to create great family dynasties out of experience which was in itself prosaically and universally Jewish—Joseph Seligman arriving in Philadelphia from his German village in 1837 with one hundred dollars sewn into the seat of his pants by an adoring mother, Henry Lehman peddling his way up the Alabama river to set up shop in Montgomery, Abraham Kuhn taking on young Solomon Loeb to help out in his clothing store in Cincinnati. The transformation took place when New York drew them in at mid-century—a moment of fantastic potential, when the merchandising of goods could turn into the merchandising of money at huge profit, to finance the opening-up of railroads, mining, and industry on a scale and at a speed that the world had never seen. The style of life of these and the other magic-name-bearers had a gargantuan richness that was as flamboyantly American as their vast financial deals. And it was America, also, that set the limits on what could be achieved socially. For though their huge homes in New York and the country were staggeringly lavish in size and service by any standard, it was an existence that was cut off at many levels from top Gentile society with a sharpness not found in other countries. The families of Our Crowd may have opened up America with finance and dazzled it with benefactions; yet for some decades they seemed socially left to their own devices. They were larger than life, but could fail at the Social Register, or even a box at the Opera. More seriously, it was an existence out of the mainstream of active politics until relatively recent times.

In almost all these respects, the atmosphere of *The Cousinhood* is very different. Great fortunes—sometimes dazzlingly great—surface in its pages, yet the overall picture is much more intimate, at home in a parochial way, in keeping with the scale and style of England itself. The story reaches a peak—unlike *Our Crowd*—in the first part of the 19th century, and had begun earlier, in the second half of the 18th century, with the arrival of a few key immigrants who put down firm roots in British trade and finance from this time on, and—to their great profit—were thus in a position to play a part in meeting the huge needs that arose for finance and supplies over the whole of Europe during the Napoleonic Wars. The essential quality of the Cousinhood families—especially in their first century—lies in the meaning one gives to the phrase "putting down roots." They were not opening up a new country, as the Americans were, but adopting (or reaching out toward) an existing heritage. Certainly the vast wealth that came later to some of these families was an echo of something unprecedented for Britain herself—her expansion in the 19th century to the leadership of world economic development. But the built-in conservatism of British life was too strong to let its tone be affected seriously by newcomers, however powerful. Paradoxically, this meant that almost from the beginning, immigrants who made the grade financially could "safely" be given their head. British self-confidence was strong enough to throw its mantle over this alien element, so that it became a natural, acceptable, and convincing element in the British scene—always provided, of course, that the newcomers never tried to claim that they were *really* or *fully* English, in the way Lord Derby or the village blacksmith was. This paradox—that the Cousinhood was totally British (or rather English) yet ineradicably alien—survived countless different forms of expression. It was lived with, resented, obscured, and enjoyed in varying degrees. It had the great English virtue of never trying to push things to a logical conclusion. One could feel 100 per cent English (or more), participate very fully in political and social life, intermarry with the aristocracy, win the Derby, or—in the most English way of all—sink comfortably into the background in some quiet country seat: the price-tag on all this working was to acknowledge (however silently) one's ultimate difference. There was always a place—albeit sometimes an uncomfortable one—for oddities and eccentrics: England was full—as it still is—of rich and talented foreigners, taking on the local patina forcefully, brilliantly, amusingly. Eton, the clubs, the racecourses, even the palace—they were all open, but on terms.

Was it the old English sense of lineage—or just convenience—that caused these Jewish families to become so fantastically interwoven? The "Crowd" families intermarried to a certain extent, but the Cousinhood was built on family links to an extraordinary degree, the picture being presented in this book via seven immensely long and detailed genealogical tables. The magic names that everyone knows are Rothschild and Montefiore; but in fact the marriage alliances that forged the Cousinhood were really based more centrally on a humbly-named Mr. Cohen—Levy Barent Cohen—who had arrived in London in 1770 and became so rich in the City by the end of the century that young Nathan Mayer Rothschild was very happy to marry his daughter Hannah in 1806. Six years later, another daughter, Judith, married young Moses Montefiore. The Montefiores, though only second-generation immigrants, were already linked in marriage to the long-settled Mocattas, as well as to the Goldsmids, bullion-dealers with the Mocattas (as they still are) on a vast scale. It is the Goldsmids, perhaps, who generate best, in this book, the early period flavor of the Cousinhood. Interspersed among tales of their huge—and sometimes catastrophic—financial deals, we read of their taking several of the Royal Dukes with them to synagogue, and entertaining King George III and his Queen at their country house at Morden. Nelson, who visited them frequently with Lady Hamilton, had to sit silently there one night after dinner for what seemed to him hours, while Moses Montefiore, the most devout of all these characters, recited the Grace after Meals in Hebrew, *in full*.

The Rothschilds went on marrying Montefiores and Cohens, and, even more, an endless stream of cousins of their own in Paris, Vienna, and elsewhere. But this was to be only part of the Cousinhood.

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Up in the north of England—in Liverpool—a local cousinhood of families called Samuel, Yates (Getz), and Franklin had graduated from commerce to finance and was preparing to move south. The preeminent member of the first London generation—due to be ennobled later as Lord Swaythling—established the great merchant-banking firm of Samuel Montagu (he had begun life the other way 'round as Montagu Samuel) and married a granddaughter of Levi Barent Cohen. One of his sons married a Goldsmid, his daughter a Montefiore connection. His nephew Herbert Samuel, who became the most important Jewish politician that England produced (ennobled as Viscount Samuel) was thus a collateral member of the now proliferating Cousinhood. A quite separate Samuel family, which had immigrated in 1750, grew to fame in the person of Sir Marcus Samuel, the founder of Shell Oil (he was ennobled as the first Viscount Bearstead), and attached itself to the Cousinhood through marriages in the next generation. Even the Sassoons, who would surely have won a place in any case in a book on Anglo-Jewry through sheer exoticism (as do Sir Ernest Cassel and Baron de Hirsch), established a link with the Cousinhood by marrying into the Rothschilds.

The knighthoods and ennoblements which have been mentioned *en passant* are, we learn, only a small part of the honors that began to accumulate around the Cousinhood from the days of Sir Moses Montefiore (knight, 1837) and Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid (baronet, 1841). To a great extent it was a natural tribute in the British context to the power and influence in the City of these leading Jews, surfacing both in business terms and in the concomitant City "offices" (Sheriff, Lord Mayor, and so on) to which they began to be elected from about 1840 on. Ironically, the first burgeoning of honors of this kind took place at a time when the Jews, powerful as they might be in the City, were still excluded from normal citizenship, expressed supremely in the right to sit in Parliament. "Emancipation" in this sense arrived only in 1858, and even then was grudging, as if expressive of the fact that Jews were not to have a normal, but a special, place in English life. Perhaps it was in unconscious recognition of this that the first Jew to take his seat—symbolically, a Rothschild—sat in the House for the next fifteen years without once opening his mouth. It was important to get over the hurdle, but not to push things too hard after that. Jews might be virtuous, useful, even distinguished, but there was still something unusual about them.

No one expressed this oddity better than the Queen herself. She had been a personal friend of Moses Montefiore since 1835, two years before her accession, when her mother had rented a modest summer house next door to him at Ramsgate and been given the key to his spacious gardens. Yet despite this long friendship, she seemed to feel that City money, when made by a Jew, was somehow tainted. This, anyhow, is what she wrote to her Prime Minister Gladstone in 1869, when he kept insisting that the leading Rothschild be given a peerage:

> The Queen really cannot make up her mind to it. It is not only the feeling of which she cannot divest herself against making a person of the Jewish religion a Peer; but she cannot think that one who owes his great wealth to contracts with Foreign Governments for Loans, or to successful speculation on the Stock Exchange can fairly claim a British Peerage.

Yet if the conviction persisted—even after the peerage hurdle finally fell in 1885—that Jews would always remain in some sense alien, this oddity, when fully acknowledged, seemed precisely the condition for the great social freedom that prevailed. Unlike the position in Germany at this time, where conversion to Christianity was an essential ticket to many "rights," the British had no taste for it, and the Cousinhood rarely went in for it, except insofar as it fell "naturally" on some of their children or grandchildren through intermarriage. A more subtle example lay in the fact that there was nothing in Anglo-Jewish life that corresponded to the role of Temple Emanu-El in New York. The Cousinhood never sought to express its superior social position in some aristocratic or "refined" kind of synagogue. A Reform synagogue was, it is true, founded in 1840 by some Cousinhood individuals anxious to break away from the rigidities of the existing Jewish establishment. But this remained an anomaly. The real Cousinhood leaders felt a responsibility to keep up a public adherence to the organization of traditional (conservative) synagogues; and one particular member, Lord Swaythling, went further by taking on the leadership, with great sincerity, of a totally Orthodox group of synagogues, known as "The Federation."

There were perhaps two broad ways—one serious and the other frivolous—in which the special position of Jews, rather than their normal citizenship role, found expression in Cousinhood activities. The first was linked to the feeling, embedded deeply in British life, that Jews had a special religious significance for mankind. Their survival was a miracle; their concern for each other throughout the world was a natural echo of their singularity as the People of the Book and the heirs of the Holy Land. The Christian had to recognize this, and did. A remarkable example of British concern for Jews, for instance, was the national outcry, at the time of the Damascus Blood Libel in 1840. In Parliament, and at a mass meeting at the Mansion House, there was a demand that British power and prestige—very significant in those days—be used to secure the release of the Jews arrested on these false charges and facing execution. When Sir Moses Montefiore set out on a journey to the Near East to make these demands personally to the Pasha and the Sultan of Turkey, he was received by the Queen before he left, and again after his triumphant return.

Behind this—and the similar outcry at the time of the Russian pogroms in the 1880's—lay a streak of pro-Jewish sentiment that was to find expression momentously in the Balfour Declaration. The idea of the Jews having a "home" in Palestine had surfaced in English

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thought in a variety of different forms in the 19th century, so that when Herzl—and later Weizmann—began to try to give it practical reality, there was a ready soil for its nourishment. Ironically, the Cousinhood itself (with some exceptions) was by this time totally hostile to anything that might seem to impugn its status as "wholly" English. One member, indeed—Edwin Montagu, son of the Orthodox Lord Swaythling—almost wrecked the proposal as a member of the British Cabinet of 1917. Yet the Balfour Declaration bore, ultimately, a Cousinhood stamp. Behind all the negotiations there was an assumption of a special relationship: the British still "responsible" for the world, the Jews both useful politically, and available, in a romantic way, for the display of British benevolence. Balfour expressed this deeply English feeling perfectly. As Bermant explains, he "was a member of the Cecil clan which had formed an inner caste within the English ruling establishment since Elizabethan times." He knew the rich Jews (including the exotic Sassoons) well, and was a close personal friend of the Rothschilds. It was to Lord Rothschild—in a calm assumption of all the indefinable realities of the Cousinhood—that Balfour wrote on November 2, 1917, telling him, in eight historic lines, that the British government had decided to facilitate "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." "I should be grateful," he added, almost as an afterthought, "if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation."

IF THIS serious side to the British involvement with Jewish experience had historic political results, the frivolous involvement with the Cousinhood at play is not to be underestimated as a significant part of the picture. From the very beginning—as we saw with George III and Nelson—the British establishment was very ready to enjoy the flamboyance with which these instant millionaires surrounded themselves. In terms of sheer size of operation, the style of the Cousinhood may not always have matched the exuberance of some members of Our Crowd, but it had its own cachet. Bermant describes a ball given by Baroness Lionel de Rothschild* at their suburban estate at Gunnersbury in 1838, as part of the festivities for Queen Victoria's coronation. There was a banquet to start the affair in the evening for the five hundred guests:

> The baroness sat between two dukes of the blood royal—Prince George of Cambridge and the Duke of Sussex. Also present were the Duke and Duchess of Somerset, the Duchess of Richmond, the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Londonderry. There were two ex-Prime Ministers in the gathering—Wellington and Melbourne—and a pair of future Prime Ministers, Russell and Disraeli. Every glittering name in England seemed to be present, and not a few from Europe—Prince and Princess Schwarzenberg of Austria, Princess Esterhazy from Hungary, Marshall Soult from France, a sparkle of German princelings. . . .

The balls, the house-parties, the matchmaking, and the never-ending political intriguing that distinguished the Victorians increasingly absorbed the Cousinhood. A thoroughly raffish tone was added when the Prince of Wales established his own lordly set, with racing, gambling, and every kind of lavish adventurousness. The Prince had a real penchant for odd characters, and also needed financial support from wherever it could come. Rothschilds and Sassoons were included in the Court favorites, together with fabulously rich railroad and mining tycoons Baron de Hirsch, Sir Ernest Cassel, and others. Bermant tells this part of the story well, capturing the dazzle and bonhomie as well as the somewhat sinister dissoluteness that surrounded the Prince. Indeed, one of the merits of this book over *Our Crowd* is that he is able to bring in legitimately the story of these legendary millionaires, since they overlapped so frequently with the Cousinhood.

Nothing in *Our Crowd*, for example, can match the casual mention of the hunting party for Edward that Baron de Hirsch staged in 1891 at his estate in Hungary, where the guests (who included the Cassels and a Sassoon, as well as Lady Randolph Churchill) slaughtered more than eleven thousand head of game in a five-day *battue*. Yet though this all makes amusing reading, it would be misleading to think of it as a guide to the real character of the book, which concentrates far more—and often rather boringly—on the high moral purpose of the Cousinhood than on its colorful by-products.

For even the flamboyant characters, it must be remembered, had their serious side. Baron de Hirsch may have enjoyed spending a few millions in having fun with the Prince, but he gave away many more millions for the support of the Jewish poor, including great benefactions in Palestine and his enormous project for establishing Russian Jews as an agricultural community in the Argentine. No genuine Cousinhood members operated on this scale. Most of them went in for quiet propriety à la Forsyte. If, in early days, the romance of sudden huge fortunes set its own style (as in Disraeli's picture of the Jew "Sidonia"—a Rothschild-like character always on hand in *Coningsby* with his preternatural wisdom and munificence), the *persona* of the Cousinhood emerged in the present century with a distinction that has virtually nothing to do with wealth and exists solely in terms of intelligence and public service.

A Rothschild was, perhaps, a good symbol of the change—the Lord Rothschild of the Balfour Declaration, who made his mark not as a financier but as a great naturalist. In this new tradition, the present holder of the title has nothing to do with the bank but is head of the Prime Minister's "Think Tank" at No. 10. Of the Montefiore dynasty, Claude, who died in 1938, was an outstanding theologian. Hugh, descendant of a collateral branch, calls himself "a Christian Jew" (or perhaps it's "a Jewish Christian"), and has been made a Bishop of the Church of England. The family ruefully regard this as the cross they have to bear.

* Many of the Rothschilds had foreign "Baron" titles, but this really did not count for much in England.

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Dilution of the tradition is inevitable, yet the high purpose of those Victorian decades has left an inextinguishable mark. A minor hero of the book, for his saintly work in social welfare, is Sir Basil Henriques, linked in origin to almost every branch of the Cousinhood, and drawing them all in—Montagus, Franklins, and of course Cohens of every hue—to support his work in the East End of London not only financially but through personal service to the poor and disadvantaged. The Cohen clan itself—a roll-call of extraordinary variety—has climaxed in the present generation in the person of Lord Cohen of Walmer, probably the most distinguished public servant of Britain today.

IN THE END it is the Jewish interest one looks for. Unless one can relate the story of these rare birds to the body-politic of Jewry as a whole, it becomes anecdotage without a central theme. There are two special moments at which this litmus-test applies.

The first is over the sudden "invasion" of England by the helpless Yiddish-speaking masses of East European Jews that began in the 1880's. Until that time, the Cousinhood had shown adequate responsibility—through a well-run Board of Guardians—in providing help for needy Jewish immigrants. But this had been small-scale. With a sharp increase now after the pogroms in Russia, the problem was not so much financial as political. While leaders like Gladstone denounced the atrocities at public meetings all over the country, there was also widespread agitation—similar in some ways to the Powellite agitation of today against black immigration—by those who said that the aliens were undercutting the wages of honest British workingmen and destroying the character of British life. A newly-published study, *The Alien Invasion* by Bernard Gainer,* helps us to understand how it was that Jewish leaders themselves began to panic. With no reliable statistics available, fantastically large numbers were being used by those who sought to bar all entry, and ultimately got a restrictive Aliens Act onto the Statute Book in 1905. The language used in the campaign conjured up a terrifying picture:

> There is hardly an Englishman not in danger of being driven from his home, not by the natural increase of our population, but by the off-scum of Europe.

To some of the Jewish leaders, it was clearly essential—in the name of the position they had established—to stop or divert the flood. The Board, as Bermant shows, did its best:

> It sent agents eastward to Germany, Poland, and Russia to try and stem the flow, and westwards to America and the colonies to direct it there. The Americans, who had their own problems, sent them home with fleas in their ears.

With little success, they turned to repatriation. "Between 1880 and 1914, the Board sent 50,000 men, women and children back to Europe." Of course, said the Board, it was "mainly at their own request, and naturally never without their own consent"!

One learns a lot about Jewish life, as it was in pre-Hitler times, from this episode. Yet even then, it was not the whole picture. Jews in considerable numbers (for England) were in fact absorbed and helped. And there is a marvellous statement on record by one member of the Cousinhood—Frederic David Mocatta—expressing, at the height of the crisis, his total devotion to both England and Jewry. "It is not for us as Englishmen," he wrote, "to try to close the entrance to our country to any of our fellow-creatures, especially such as are oppressed. It is not for us as Jews to try and bar our gates against other Jews, who are persecuted solely for their professing the same religion as ourselves." But then Mocatta—as the book shows—was an exceptionally noble man.

The second test came over Zionism. When the Balfour Declaration was being prepared, the Cousinhood—though with some exceptions—was not simply hostile but terrified. In a famous letter to the *Times*, a number of the magic-name-bearers sweated blood to prove that a national home for Jews in Palestine would stamp Jews like themselves "as strangers in their native lands." They founded a League of British Jews, and intensified their campaign once the Declaration was issued. Lionel de Rothschild pleaded with the government to do nothing, in propaganda abroad, "to encourage the idea of a Jewish National Home."

But reality gradually took over. Cousinhood industrialists (like Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen) helped to establish major enterprises in Palestine in the 1920's. Palestine as a refuge for German Jews had practical value in the 1930's. Israel, as a triumph of Jewish identity, began to inspire feelings, from 1948 on, that the timid British patriots of an earlier generation would never have recognized. In the drama before the Six-Day War of 1967, the English Rothschilds (never famed, unlike the French branch, for public benefactions on a large scale) calmly handed over a check for one million pounds. Perhaps the Cousinhood is so English now that it is no longer afraid of being Jewish.

* Crane, Russak & Co., 302 pp., $12.75.

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Books in Review

FAP and Its Enemies

THE POLITICS OF A GUARANTEED INCOME: THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION AND THE FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN. By DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN. *Random House. 579 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by MARTIN MAYER

IF A somnolent Congressman from a safe district had fallen asleep in the basement of the West Wing of the White House in October 1968 and awakened the following January to find Daniel P. Moynihan behind the desk, one thing would have been perfectly clear to him: Hubert Humphrey had won the election. Lifelong Democrat, protégé of Averell Harriman and Arthur Goldberg, architect of the first poverty program, quondam candidate for President of the New York City Council on the Democratic ticket, Moynihan could not possibly be part of a Nixon administration. But he was; and he enjoyed it, too. He knew he was one of very few certified intellectuals ever to have daily influential access to a President on questions of domestic policy, and he charged about the country on the WATS line, asking all sorts of friends and acquaintances—including me—if we had ideas the President might wish to try out. I didn't, myself; but Moynihan did, and he sold his most important idea to Richard Nixon. *The Politics of a Guaranteed Income* tells how the sale was made and what happened to the idea in the eighteen months that followed.

Moynihan has in great measure the prime quality of all successful Presidential advisers: he is good company. Nixon apparently has what seemed to Moynihan, as it would to most college professors, the prime quality of a successful President: he is highly intelligent. What had got Moynihan his invitation to the White House was unquestionably the fact that he had been the first to spot the trend toward black welfare dependency that became the social horror story of the Johnson and Nixon years. In early 1965, while heading the policy-planning division of the Labor Department, Moynihan had drawn the graph that compared unemployment figures with welfare rolls, and had demonstrated that the two lines were no longer moving in parallel, as they always had before. The numbers on welfare had begun to rise steadily, regardless of employment opportunities.

In a memo to Lyndon Johnson, Moynihan attempted to explain this appalling new development by correlating it with what appeared to be a breakdown in the Negro family. All the public attention went to his explanation, which was merely a first approximation, but the facts he sought to explain did not go away because reasonable doubts were thrown on his explanation; indeed, the trend lines he had uncovered became more frighteningly evident in the boom years of the late 1960's. Job training failed; community action became a nursery for infantile leftism; a disproportionate fraction of the money spent on the poverty program went to social workers and other professionals, whose utility seemed minimal; and the white working-class taxpayer grew good and sick of the whole thing.

Moynihan brought Nixon an analysis of poverty at large—not just welfare dependency—stressing the fact that most of the American poor were at work, for salaries that were simply inadequate. What was needed was a system that would benefit all poor people, not just those on welfare. This system, bluntly, would have to give people money, not "help." It would have to be enough money to keep body and soul together, but not so much as to destroy the incentive to work. "The nation had begun a war on poverty," Moynihan writes, describing his argument with Arthur Burns over the political viability of this strategy. "Why not win it?"

BY far the best part of this book is the first 220 pages, in which Moynihan develops the argument for his Family Assistance Plan in the context of the struggle for the President's mind. He knows this subject overwhelmingly well, in depth and breadth, scholarly background and first-hand experience, European and American reference. Because he is telling a story, he can carry a large freight of information painlessly; and because his arguments were victorious he can present them without polemic, and without worry that an occasional jolt of his considerable wit will distract the acolytes. Where he is interpreting the President's views, of course, he may be wrong—on this year's evidence, there seems reason to believe that Senator Abraham Ribicoff and Richard P. Nathan, who have written about Moynihan's book in the *New Republic*, have grounds for their belief that Nixon took the work requirement features of FAP more seriously than Moynihan thinks he did. But while he is going up the mountain, Moynihan is continually interesting and vastly informative.

Once we get past Nixon's speech of August 9, 1969, however—given here in its full, stupefying length—the story goes downhill. Moynihan proceeds by presenting one at a time the arguments of the various groups which opposed FAP, and replying to them, also one at a time. Because the strengths of the proposal remain the same regardless of the argument Moynihan is answering, the book becomes repetitious. I have no difficulty accepting Moynihan's central position—that Nixon could

MARTIN MAYER, *author of* The Schools, The Lawyers, *and most recently,* About Television, *contributed "Higher Education for All?" to our February issue.*

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have handled the conservative opposition to FAP, and it was the Left that devoured its own—but this is not a theme that can support as many minor variations as Moynihan spins out from it.

And in the end the moral is not quite as clear as Moynihan's last pages indicate. He has been accused of being soft on Nixon, but he is surely no more so than, say, Schlesinger was on Kennedy; Moynihan not only owes Nixon loyalty, he clearly likes the man. The person he is soft on is Hugh Scott, the minority leader in the Senate. After all, it was Everett Dirksen whose conversion to the cause got the most important social legislation of the Johnson administration through a recalcitrant Senate; I for one cannot believe that a Dirksen in Scott's shoes, persuaded by Nixon or Moynihan that FAP should pass, would have allowed the shambles that occurred in the Senate. But Moynihan omits Dirksen from his historical references, and mentions Scott only in passing, as the fellow in whose room Nixon's field marshals counted their votes before they were hatched.

Worse, the most effective single spokesman against FAP, as Moynihan points out with rueful admiration, was the conservative Senator John Williams of Delaware, who demonstrated that some of the numbers didn't work out right, and destroyed the viability of the detailed legislation that had been passed by the House. Regardless of how important the President considered the work *requirement* in FAP, everyone from the President on down (including Moynihan) was insistent on the need for a work *incentive*. Work incentives meant that the recipient of FAP grants who took a job would have to be able to keep a noticeable share of that money in addition to his or her wages until those wages rose past a reasonably good minimum figure.

THE problem, which Moynihan lays out very clearly and fairly, was circular and unresolvable. FAP had to be set low enough ($1,600 for a family of four) to fit into a feasible federal budget and maintain a rational appetite for work. But this figure was so low that supplements (most notably, food stamps, Medicaid, and public-housing subsidies) were required to keep alive those who were stuck with nothing else. Recipients who got jobs would at designated income points lose not only portions of their FAP grants, but also their eligibility for the supplements. At these points, the "notch effects," as Moynihan calls them, would provide strong *dis*incentives to work. Without the supplements, no liberal support at all—Moynihan himself wouldn't have bought it. With the supplements, no conservative support at all—Moynihan himself was itchy about notches.

What Senator Williams did to FAP, as Moynihan says, was "threat analysis in worst-possible-

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case condition." Moreover, the notches were not the creation of FAP—they were already present in the welfare program, and FAP if anything made them less rather than more harmful. But an argument that Moynihan begins with the claim that "On balance, the statistical quality of the FAP planning was notable" has to end with the claim that over time the inherited follies of welfare could have been sloughed from a steadily improving FAP. Both claims are, I think, true; but in the move from one to the other, the case for FAP becomes something less than overpowering.

WHAT remains completely convincing is Moynihan's thesis that FAP was a gamble the Left should have wished to take if it had really cared about the poor and especially the black poor. Some of the most interesting pages in the book express his understanding of why the Left copped out (with a few honorable exceptions, among them Edward Kennedy). In politics, Moynihan argues, "Symbolic rewards are at least as valuable as real rewards, in ways more so." Because Nixon could not offer the symbolic rewards, his opponents shunned the real ones. So in the end, of course, they got neither.

Moynihan has too ebullient a temperament to finish his book sadder but wiser; he contents himself with a parting shot from Bertrand de Jouvenel and a comment about a "persisting habit of mind" on the Left. But the book leaves a disturbing thought. The distribution of symbolic rewards to one side and real rewards to the other is a necessary part of the logrolling that is the heart of democratic government. An instinctive understanding of this necessity was what made Robert Wagner a successful Mayor of New York; lack of that understanding has made John Lindsay a disastrous one. If the interrelations of government and media in contemporary society have really made this sort of adjustment impossible, some fundamental institutions in our country may be in even worse trouble than the chiliasts of the 60's were saying when they were so rudely interrupted.

The Artist as Performer

NORMAN MAILER. By RICHARD POIRIER. *Viking. 176 pp. $4.95.*
ST. GEORGE AND THE GODFATHER. By NORMAN MAILER. *Signet-New American Library. 229 pp. $1.50.*

Reviewed by DAVID THORBURN

RICHARD POIRIER'S new book on Norman Mailer is one in a series devoted to "modern masters . . . who have changed or are changing the life and thought of our age." Shrewd, trendy, and confused by turns, Poirier's monograph may be said to complete a ritual of canonization remarkable at once for its premature swiftness and for its failure to distinguish between Mailer's increasingly grandiose promises and his actual performances.

Mailer's career has not, of course, described an unbroken decline. *The Armies of the Night* (1967) represented a genuine if partial recovery, and his latest book, though it is narrated by the now overly-familiar Aquarius and journeys through the usual Mailer territory, is a decisive improvement over recent disasters like *King of the Hill* (1971), a short but still tedious mixture of machismo and apocalypse concerning "the fight of the century" between Ali and Frazier, and *The Prisoner of Sex* (also 1971), an act of empty self-importance probably without rival in recent American letters. But it is surely small praise to say that the Mailer of the past six or eight years has not always touched the nadir of his gifts; and it remains true, I think, that nothing he has done in the past decade comes near to the seriousness and resonance of his flawed but brilliantly promising earlier work —the first three novels and especially the long stories, "The Man Who Studied Yoga" and "The Time of Her Time," both included in *Advertisements for Myself* (1959).

DAVID THORBURN, *who teaches English at Yale, is co-editor (with Geoffrey Hartman) of* Romanticism: Vistas, Instances, Continuities, *a collection of essays which is to be published later this year by Cornell University Press.*

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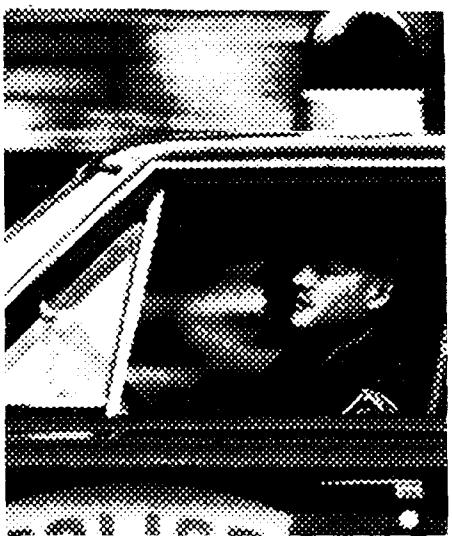

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Poirier urges an alternative and far more optimistic valuation of Mailer's later work, though even he concedes that *Miami and the Siege of Chicago* (1968), *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1970), and *The Prisoner of Sex* give "evidence that Mailer's imagination . . . is becoming dangerously rigid and circumscribed, particularly when he indulges in rather simple and fashionable concerns about the future of the imagination in an age of science and technology." Such candor is disarming, and suggests that this loyal advocate has learned much from his subject about the utility of anticipating the objections of one's readers. But as with Mailer's more cunning gestures in this vein, Poirier's explicit admission that Mailer can be tiresome and reductive scarcely disposes of the problem. His book, in fact, is hopelessly divided against itself, most persuasive in those passages that admit to impatience and disappointment with Mailer's endless strident posturing about technology and cancer and apocalyptic sex.

Poirier's own sense of himself as a cultural radical seems to me to explain his excessive regard for Mailer and his willingness to minimize what he knows to be large weaknesses in him. The title essay in Poirier's previous book, *The Performing Self* (1971), offers a theory of literature as performance that places decisive weight on individually brilliant moments or passages and that proclaims its antipathy to the New Critical standard of coherence. In the broadest sense this essay—along with others in the book and especially the revealingly titled "The War Against the Young"—has political intentions. It wishes to liberate literary study from what it sees as the arid tyranny of establishment formalism and to rekindle our appreciation for those energies in literary texts that are often released fitfully, in local instances, rather than in the total structure of the work.

In the new book this honorable if not entirely persuasive argument is elaborated to an extreme, and Poirier's shrewd but also limiting focus on Mailer's richly met-

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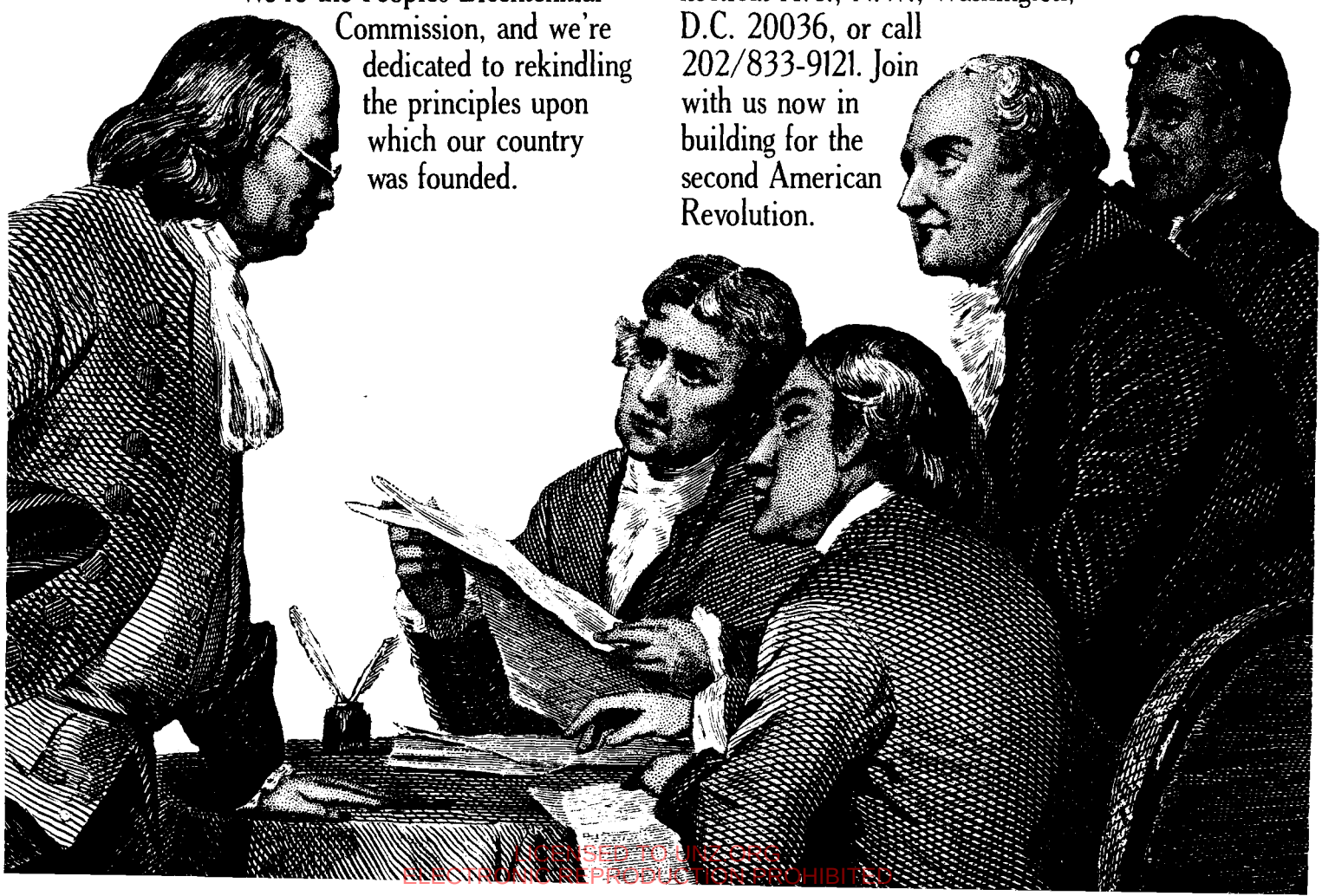

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aphoric and extended sentences encourages him to disregard or to minimize the larger context that encloses them. In his eagerness to value Mailer the performer Poirier is even willing to relieve him of the obligation to say anything at all: "To treat [Mailer's] writing as a series of opinions on subjects makes no more sense than to treat one of Sugar Ray Robinson's dazzling performances as if it were adequately summarized in a KO." Or, again: Mailer's "language is, then, not a reference to experience. To read Mailer as if the language were a series of referential signs is wholly to misread him. . .". To dissociate an author's style so entirely from its content is surely to achieve an odd freedom from the alleged narrowness of the New Criticism.

Poirier is not consistent, however. And the obverse of this excessive formalism is his insistence on Mailer's *relevance*. For Poirier, Mailer is "easily the equal . . . of Fitzgerald and Hemingway, potentially of Faulkner" because the "pace and movement of his writing" embody "the central incoherence of the way we live now." Because he shares, finally, in Mailer's apocalyptic and (for me) radically simplifying view of American life, Poirier allows himself to grant visionary substance to what in Mailer is actually mere assertion, easy rhetoric; he doesn't require his author to supply the concrete, real evidence for his grandiose maunderings about our malaise.

Poirier's confidence in Mailer's vision of our psychic impoverishment is clarified—and exposed—in this revealing sentence: "The reason why most thoughtful and literate young readers prefer Mailer to, say, Updike or Roth or Malamud is that his timing is synchronized to theirs, while the others move to an older beat." Leaving aside the question of how Poirier has identified these "thoughtful" youths and of how objectively he has inquired into their literary preferences, we must surely doubt the usefulness of such a standard of judgment. The young at all times, and especially in the present moment, have an insatiable hunger for apocalypse and a rich but also debilitating impatience with the complexities of the quotidian and the real. The passion of America's young for such moral simpletons as Vonnegut or Brautigan or, even, Kahlil Gibran—the Pablum Romantics, we might call them—scarcely inspires confidence in their judgment.

If Mailer has won over our youth, thoughtful or otherwise, it is not necessarily cause for rejoicing. For the great strength and value of the earlier Mailer—vestiges of whom survive in *The Armies of the Night*, though rarely later—had been to awaken even in his older readers an authentic sense of spiritual endangerment but also at the same time to complicate and frustrate it: so that he was then able to dramatize not only the spirit's yearning for transcendence, its ache and discontent, but also the self-deceptions and simplifications such yearning encourages. This Mailer, who has absented himself from the later work but whom I would wish still to honor, was the enemy of psychological or political simplicity. He tried, as he said in an interview reprinted in *Advertisements for Myself*, to penetrate "into the nuance of things." If he succeeded imperfectly, still he gave promise then—most impressively in the tangled political agonies of *Barbary Shore*, in the moral complexity and generosity of "The Man Who Studied Yoga," and in the encompassing ironic candor of "The Time of Her Time"—that he might become almost as rare and precious to us as he imagined himself to be.

St. George and the Godfather, despite some genuinely fine moments and a restraint surprising in the author of *The Prisoner of Sex*, illustrates the sorry distance Mailer has traveled in recent years and demonstrates how rigid and reductive, how hostile to nuance, he has become. Early in the book, during an account of the debate on the floor of the Democratic convention concerning various radical platform planks, Mailer writes:

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> [A] plank supporting the rights of homosexuals was political suicide. For it had the power to mobilize votes against you. Out in America, far beyond Miami, lived a damp dull *wad* of the electorate. They often did not vote. It took no ordinary issue to fire their seat. But the right to condemn homosexuality (and abortion! and welfare!) was a piece of their cherished rights: woe to the politician who would deprive them of rights. Homosexuality had to go.

In its context this passage might appear to describe not Mailer's own attitudes but those of the political "realists" who forced defeat of the radical platform. But it becomes clear as the book continues and as references to "the wad" recur with the persistence of a *leitmotif*, that Mailer himself shares this estimate of the ordinary American. Mailer's near total contempt for this undifferentiated mass of people, his reluctance even to conceive that they belong to the human species, is a direct consequence of his need to reduce political and moral questions to the polarities upon which nearly everything he has written in the past decade fundamentally depends. If there is irony or complexity or even a whisper of self-judgment in Mailer's account of "the wad," it would take someone even more loyal than Richard Poirier to discover it. The Young Voters for the President, Mailer informs us,

> are not the most attractive faces he has seen. Hundreds of young faces and not one is a beauty, neither by natural good looks nor by the fine-tuning of features through vitality or wit—the children in this crowd remind him of other crowds he knows well, and does not like. Of course!—they are the faces of the wad! —all those blobs of faces who line up outside TV theaters and wait for hours that they may get in to see the show live, yes, the show that will be more alive than their faces. The genius of Nixon! Has he selected this gaggle of mildly stunted minds from photograph files?

The old irony that readers of satire never imagine they are its object has special application in Mailer's case. For in the two pas-

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sages just quoted—they can serve as an emblem for all the large, easy divisions to which he yields in his later works—Mailer's polarizing habit creates for his readers a comfortable, morally superior perspective from which to look down upon the antics of this blobbish wad. There is nothing here to unsettle those who buy books or those who review them or those who award literary prizes. On the contrary, there is every confirmation of their sense of literate and politically enlightened superiority. There is dread, there is madness loose in the land, Mailer keeps telling his enlightened coterie. It is in the wad, in their ugly suburbs; its odor comes off those Xerox copiers, that fascist architecture, those plastic toys and utensils. It is out there, external to you and me; we are no part of its cause, indeed we are its enemy, heroes of the resistance, and so can welcome, even exult in that Armageddon whose arrival Mailer has been doggedly predicting for so many years.

"At its best," Poirier says, Mailer's "writing exemplifies the *kind* of effort that can and needs to be made by anyone who proposes to make more than submissive sense of the world as it now is." Mailer, in other words, must be placed in the Romantic tradition, and particularly in the line of major American Romantics that includes Hawthorne, Emerson, Melville, and Faulkner, all of whom are invoked explicitly in Poirier's book. There is no doubt that Mailer himself has insisted on such a placement of his work, but as Lawrence said, we are obliged to trust the tale not the teller. The authentic Romantic earns his vision by looking hard at the real world, by acknowledging that world's resistance to the imagination of crisis and transformation. The visionary assertions of such a writer have force and power only insofar as we are persuaded that they have been wrested from a genuine confrontation with the toughness, the recalcitrance, of the ordinary universe. By this essential standard the later Mailer's Romanticism is a feeble counterfeit. For how can he be said to offer meaningful resistance to a world he so resolutely refuses even to see?

The place and time that Mailer affects to transcend has no existence outside the apocalyptic fevers of his own brain. At their urging he will transform virtually an entire population into "the wad" or, alternatively, he will disclose that existential dread seethes within our astronauts. Sometimes, as in the latest book, a single passage will join these related impulses, will show us Mailer driven first to deny the visible nuance of things and then, in a frenzy of contempt and simplification, to labor for the discovery of another, more apocalyptic complexity:

> Yes, the loser [Nixon] stands talking to all of his gang of adolescent losers who are so proud to have chosen stupidity as a way of life, and they are going to win. The smog of the wad lies over the heart. Freud is obsolete. To explain Nixon, nothing less than a new theory of personality can now suffice.

That Mailer himself knows, or suspects, the dangers of his taste for such vicious hyperbole merely adds to the bleakness of his situation. *St. George and the Godfather,* for example, contains the usual (minimal) gestures of self-deflation, but there is little evidence that they have restrained Mailer's compulsion to polarize and simplify. Poirier sees such gestures as proof that Mailer is undergoing "a healthy negative assessment" of himself, but this notion seems more generous than reasonable. Over how many years, in how many volumes, will Mailer wryly wonder, as in *The Prisoner of Sex,* "if his vision, for lack of some cultivation in the middle, was not too compulsively ready for the apocalyptic"? Increasingly these and similar "confessions" look to be cunning acts of self-deception, stratagems by which Mailer convinces himself to persist in and even to escalate his foolishness. Or perhaps they are faint callings from the vestigial artist and truth-teller buried in

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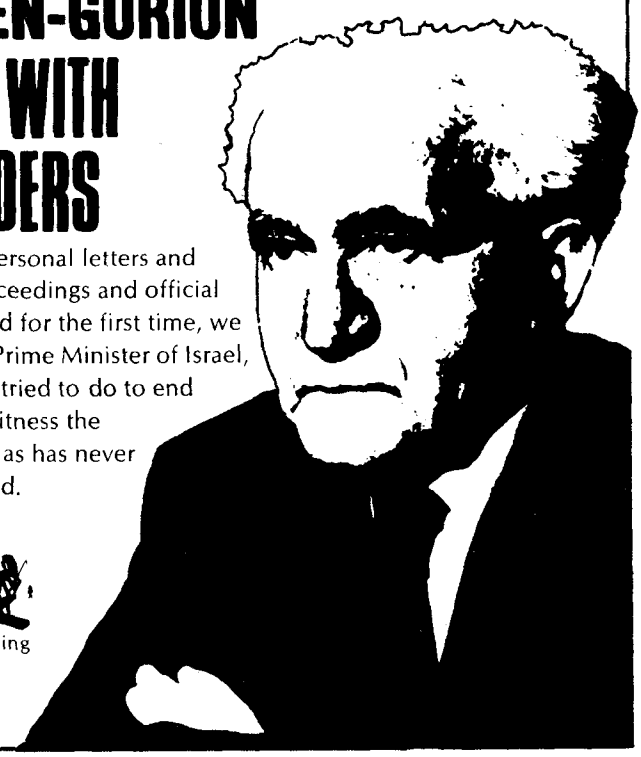

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him, signals whose message is by now desperate: help me, please! demand more of me, stop rewarding what is slovenly and careless and poor in my talent. We as readers do no honor to what is genuine in Mailer by blinding ourselves to the deepening crisis into which his work has fallen.

Fathers and Sons

REFLECTIONS ON A TEAPOT. By RONALD SANDERS. *Harper & Row. 383 pp. $8.95.*

MY LAST TWO THOUSAND YEARS. By HERBERT GOLD. *Random House. 246 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by DAVID STERN

ALTHOUGH both these works pose as straightforward autobiographical memoirs, each is actually a document of coming-to-Jewishness, an attempt to define a uniquely personal Jewish identity by a narrative of the events through which that identity came ultimately to be formed. Conversion is hardly the apt term to describe the moment of time in which either Sanders or Gold discovered his Jewishness—both men are Jews and did not become anything they previously were not —but it is precisely the aura of conversion, its sense of apocalyptic finality, as well as its inwardness and impenetrability, with which both men have invested their acknowledgment of a fact, at heart, commonplace: that they were born Jews.

It is nevertheless in the particular trajectories of their authors' lives that the interest and uniqueness of both books lie. Sanders, a half-Jew whose father was not Jewish, found his Jewish identity through a scholarly commitment to Yiddish culture and the history of Jewish immigration to America from Eastern Europe. Gold first began to discover his Jewishness while visiting Haiti, although he did not undergo his "conversion" until a subsequent visit to Israel; he also attempts to locate the specific quality of his prose style—this

DAVID STERN, *a young writer, holds the 1972-73 Henry Evans Fellowship from Columbia University.*

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touches upon his early decision to become a writer—in the experience of his own Yiddish-speaking parents and their struggles with a foreign language that would eventually become the tool of their son's vocation. Yet the fact that both place the origins of their private returns to Zion neither in religion nor in Zionism but in Jewish cultures either extinct or on the verge of extinction begins to suggest the strangeness, eccentricity, and complexity which a simple acknowledgment of one's Jewishness might finally require.

Reflections on a Teapot takes its title from the famous children's song, "I'm a little teapot, short and stout," which Sanders's father, George, an Englishman by birth and a struggling Tin Pan Alley musician, composed in 1939 when his son was seven years old. The boy grew up in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn among Italians and Germans (not among the Jews who lived almost exclusively in the affluent sections of the neighborhood), and if he ever felt himself a pariah, it was not for the Jewish but for the English half of his parentage. His home was utterly lacking in any identifying Jewish qualities, but was suffused instead with a nostalgia for the turn-of-the-century England in which his father had grown up and out of which came the little teapot with all its precious evocations of, and yearnings for, the Victorian nursery; young Ronald, for example, still wore knickers and an Eton cap long after all his classmates had given them up.

Yet however complete his ignorance of a Jewish past, the boy did nevertheless know and feel himself to be a Jew. George Sanders for his part never encouraged his son to develop any interest in the church which he himself had left as a youth, while Sanders's mother told her children that they were Jewish because, according to traditional Jewish law, the child inherits his mother's religion. It seems no less ironic that the mother who had married out of and rejected her faith should implicitly fall back upon its most basic tenets in raising her children than that a Jewish identity so apparently tenuous should prove decisive and momentous for the son's future. It was this very tenuity, indeed, which characterized the young Sanders's own first contacts with a "Jewish" community: he was first called a "dirty little Jew" by a girl whose father, but not mother, was Jewish and who therefore was herself not Jewish. Even what would be thought of as the specifically "Jewish" qualities of those youths his own age whom Sanders did eventually meet—first in high school and later at Kenyon College—owed more to Brooklyn antisnobbery, City College intellectualism, and the Marx brothers than to anything intrinsically Jewish.

When Sanders did come to commit himself unequivocally to his Jewish identity, it was neither in high school nor at Kenyon but, unpredictably, in an army boot-camp and through an entirely trivial incident. Required to declare his religion on his dogtag, Sanders first thought to write down "nondenominational"—which, in fact, best described his religious beliefs. When, however, it was bluntly explained to him that his choice would determine under what religious sign he would be buried if killed in combat, Sanders realized that what was required was less a mere bureaucratic decision than an existential commitment for all eternity. A Star of David suddenly appeared on an imaginary tombstone; he wrote down "J," and discovered "at the innermost core of my particularity, I was a Jew or nothing."

The eventual shape which this commitment would take emerged in graduate school where Sanders wrote a thesis on Abraham Cahan and learned Yiddish—a language which he remembered hearing spoken by his mother and her relatives in his childhood when they did not wish the children to understand what was being said. But the real irony of Ronald Sanders's odyssey lies not only in his choice of a culture dying more rapidly than even his enthusiasm for it could grow but that, despite his commitment to a Jewish past uniquely the possession of his mother, he should nevertheless remain so entirely his father's son. *Reflections on a Teapot* begins with an account of George Sanders's early life, ends with his death, and is dedicated to his memory. Although Sanders's mother alone determined the fact of her son's Jewishness, she is scarcely mentioned by him in the course of his memoir. It is exclusively with his father—with the ghost of the *goy* in the family—that Sanders is ever wrestling, and it is his father's character as well that determines the voice of the son' narrative: quiet, gentle, self-effacing. And finally, the same ambivalence which informs the son's struggle with his father also marks Ronald Sanders as a Jew.

Sanders exchanged his father's teapot for a *chainik*; but the son's achievement was a betrayal of the father as well. Early in his book, Sanders writes, "Culturally and temperamentally my father's son, I had no place else to go. Had my father been a truckdriver instead of a musician and one-time budding Shakespearean actor, I might have turned out to be more of a *goy* after all." He would, most probably, have turned out to be a different Jew, but in no case, unless he had actually chosen to convert, a *goy*. Precisely this tone of bemused surprise at having *chosen* to become a Jew—a tone characterizing Sanders's book as a whole and one which betrays an inability to recognize and accept the fact that he was *born* a Jew—leads Sanders to assume an attitude of ironic distance from, and even arrogance toward, his past and present situation. That in searching for an avenue to express his Jewishness he should have settled upon the one facet of the tradition forever closed to him—for Yiddish, as he himself remarks, was less a living language or culture than an order of "experience"—only begins to suggest how poignantly fatherless Sanders still remains.

HERBERT GOLD'S *My Last Two Thousand Years* begins like a manifesto of the Prodigal Son returned home: "By a wide and narrow path I found my way back to an allegiance I didn't possess. Born a Jew in Lakewood, Ohio, I embraced the belief and accusation: America is enough." The substance of this autobiography is

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largely devoted to Gold's discovery that America was *not* enough—the gradual disillusionment of a young romantic in search of love, community, and art. The story is familiar, one told often enough, perhaps too often: a year at Columbia; a stint in the army at the close of World War II; bohemian life in Paris; an early marriage, the inevitable divorce; and a lonely bachelor's slumming among those hungry for success-and-fame in Manhattan. Though neither the loneliness nor the malaise ever sounds so convincingly bleak that one does not privately envy it for oneself, what remains most peculiar of all is that out of this should emerge a confession of Jewishness.

Gold first began to come to terms with his Jewish self while on a lecture tour in Haiti, a "land without Jews"* where he nevertheless undertook a search for the remains of a Jewish community. An enterprise which began as little more than a paradox—to find Jews where there could be none—culminated in a discovery even more fantastic: Haiti was filled, overflowing, with Jews. Besides recent European refugees, Gold found mulattoes named Cohen, Berlin, and Goldenburg, all presumably descended from Jewish merchants who had once traded on the island; and in one distant coastal village, a Jewish tailor from Russia, Monsieur Schneider, the husband of several native women, all sisters, and father of countless little Schneiders, "all gleaming mulatto boys." The same Monsieur Schneider, upon his death, was elevated to the pantheon of native deities as the god Ibo-Juif. Finally there was the obligatory Israeli on an aid mission to teach the Haitians the art of breeding fish, and who, years later, led Gold to visit Israel.

However much the episode may smack of sheer literary invention, Gold's paradoxical discovery of Jews in the land without Jews comes finally to embody a grand metaphor for the discovery of his own Jewishness. The child of a home which, he claims, taught him nothing of what it was to be a Jew, and equally the product of the myth of the self-created artist who needs no past, Gold began to discover within himself those same qualities of "myth and imagination" which he had found in the Jews of Haiti. To be sure, the Jews whom Gold discovered there were not so much the fabled remnants of Israel as simple survivors, containing within themselves only the merest vestiges of Jewishness—Jewish oddities, as it were. But then, Gold himself is one representative of another class of Jewish oddities, perhaps the most paradoxical of them all: the American-Jewish novelist.

GOLD'S full conversion to Jewishness came on a visit to Israel at the time of its tenth anniversary as a state. Like most Jews on their first visit, Gold suddenly found himself at home; but for Gold, the realization that he had finally arrived at the end of all his searching amounted to both the Day of Judgment and the Apocalypse. Wandering through the streets of Jerusalem in the early dawn, "I came to learn certain secrets about the deals I had made with myself. . . . I had put the doubt and gaming of love ahead of all other knowledge, ahead of knowledge itself." Love—by which Gold largely means sex—cannot replace community; and it was community, and the consolations of history, for which he had all along been searching and which, in Israel, he found. For Gold the writer, community and history promised an immortality which even art could not provide. For Gold the Jew, community and history offered reconciliation with a fate long evaded.

Yet what does it mean, concretely, to be a Jew? Although there is no reason to doubt the genuiness of Gold's Jewish feeling, his answer to this question is artless and not a little self-serving: he learned that "to be a Jew required nothing at all." Now it is certainly true that the fact of Jewishness, as birthright, requires nothing more than the passivity of emerging from the womb of a Jewish mother. But

* This section appeared in COMMENTARY, June 1971.

LETTERS FROM SARDIS

The excitement and disappointments in the quest of long-buried cultures.

by George M.A. Hanfmann

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Judaism, whether as religion, as nationalist ideology, or as culture, does finally require and demand more than the simple acknowledgment of birthright, and does finally represent something more than "the otherworldly worldliness which offers a vision of the eternal in the here-and-now." At the very least, Judaism demands respect for its taboos, if not an active commitment to its rites and traditions. *My Last Two Thousand Years* ends with Gold, now remarried to a non-Jew (his first wife was Jewish), present at the birth of a son. To both Gold's and his wife's surprise, the son turns out to be twin boys whom Gold decides to name Ari and Ethan: "that way we could have one Jewish and one New England Protestant twin." Intermarriage may or may not be the most up-to-date form of apostasy, but one may doubt whether protestations of Jewishness of the kind with which *My Last Two Thousand Years* abounds will be enough in themselves to insure the Jews another two millennia on earth.

Problems of Democracy

POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. By ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG. *Harper Torchbooks. 123 pp. $1.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG'S book is something of a literary oddity: two excellent essays (the first on civil disobedience, the second on political violence) which there should have been no need to write. He demonstrates, with inexorable logic, propositions which everybody but the *hochgelehrte* would recognize as true without the demonstration—although common men might themselves be unable to prove the theorems, just as I am quite unable to demonstrate that the earth goes round the sun. (It is a matter of some surprise to me that there is not a flourishing revisionist school of astronomy in our universities, dedicated to the prop-

JOSEPH W. BISHOP, JR. is *Richard Ely Professor of Law at Yale University Law School.*

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osition that Galileo, Copernicus, and Kepler were misled by their lack of a proper ideological perspective.)

Thus, Dr. van den Haag proves with Euclidean incontrovertibility that anarchy is not a workable polity (as recently established empirically by Chairman Mao's little experiment); that the notion that everyone should be free to violate any law offensive to his own ideas of right and wrong is not very different from anarchy; that dictatorship and oligarchy are not "true" democracy; that right-wing despotisms and left-wing despotisms resemble each other far more than either of them resemble democracies; that representative democracies, even when accompanied by capitalism, usually do more for the happiness of the governed than any despotism, no matter how loud and sincere its claims to enlightenment.

The sad fact is that there *is* a need for the book. Every one of the truisms in the preceding paragraph has been challenged, not only by ignorant enthusiasts, but by famous academic figures. Dr. van den Haag has, incidentally, rendered a signal service by translating into terse and plain English the philosophy of Professor Herbert Marcuse, which is essentially that an enlightened elite has both a right and a duty to impose its ideas by force on the incurably stupid and ignorant majority. This is a feat which that venerable mooncalf has never been able to accomplish for himself—an inability which may in large part account for his high profundity. He does as much for the legal philosophy of Ronald M. Dworkin, Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford: Professor Dworkin, a representative specimen of the fashionable English variety of legal philosopher, who emerged from the chrysalis of a truly gifted American corporation lawyer (something of a reversal of the process normal among the lepidoptera), is the discoverer of the rule of Natural Law that if anyone "argues that he has a moral right . . . to protest in a way he finds effective [or to break a law which he thinks immoral] . . . then an official . . . can not point . . . to a Supreme Court decision as having . . . decisive weight." To dissect such doctrines, to pickle them in formaldehyde and place them on exhibition, is an enterprise deserving of the highest praise.

THE core of Dr. van den Haag's own philosophy seems to be that "violence is justifiable only when its ends cannot be attained by other less costly means and when the ends can justify the cost. Few ends do." I have some reservations about his corollary conclusion that "In a democracy violence is needed, and therefore, justifiable, only if one despairs of the far less costly process of persuading the majority, yet believes a change of policy to be important enough to impose it without majority support." It seems to me that as a practical matter violence is almost never justified in a *constitutional* democracy—i.e., one which gives the minority basic protection, like the Bill of Rights, against serious oppression by the majority. One can, of course, imagine hypotheticals; if Congress were to pass an act providing that all red-headed children must be sacrificed to Moloch, and if the Supreme Court were to hold it constitutional, I would myself resort to violence. Such a contingency is, however, unlikely; the Court would certainly strike down the statute as an establishment of religion, in violation of the First Amendment. I know of no actual example of a constitutional law whose immorality I believe so outrageous, and my own opinion so clearly right, that I would subvert constitutional democracy in order to get rid of it. My father, for example, detested Prohibition and violated the Volstead Act at every opportunity (fortunately, the opportunities were pretty frequent). In the mid-20's the prospects for repeal seemed extremely bleak, but it never occurred to him to shoot Bishop Cannon or bomb the offices of the Women's Christian Temperance Union in order to force its repeal.

Looking at his book as a whole, I do not think that Dr. van den Haag means to say that violence is justifiable in a democracy whenever the perpetrator believes it to be the only means to an end which he sincerely thinks desirable. It is only in democracies, of course, that civil disobedience and political violence (without the authority of the government) pose a substantial problem. In totalitarian states there is much more justification, for there is as a rule no other way to try to bring about change, but there is also far less opportunity. About the most extreme form of civil disobedience in Russia is standing in Red Square with a very small placard urging respect for the Soviet Constitution, and it takes extraordinary courage to go to such lengths. If there are dissenters in China, nobody knows who they are, or were. For the government of a democratic state, however, few decisions require greater wisdom than those on the amount and kind of force to be used in repressing violence and enforcing law.

Dr. van den Haag is, among other things, a practicing psychoanalyst. I wish that he had gone deeper into the psychology of terrorists. He does recognize that not all men are naturally virtuous—i.e., that the concepts of original sin and the instigation of the Devil are picturesque descriptions of something which really is a strong factor in human behavior, that we are not by nature gentle and lovable creatures, corrupted by capitalism. The fact is that the hominids have been prone to violence at least since Australopithecines took to braining baboons and each other in East Africa several million years ago. It is unlikely that these ancient ancestors troubled their small brains about moral justification, but, if they did, they found it, for they had to eat. Most modern men must look for other excuses to gratify the primitive urge. Those in whom it is particularly strong often find the excuse in politics, religion, or morality. The taste for irrationality, which complements and reinforces the proclivity to violence among the zealots, seems to have developed later and to be still more distinctively human; there is, for example, no solid evidence of religious belief before the time of Neanderthal man. In short, a Weatherperson is probably closer than most of us to man in a "natural" state. It is a sad fact that in recent years institutions of higher learning have done a poor job of civilizing such specimens.

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Lost Identity

THAT MOST DISTRESSFUL NATION: THE TAMING OF THE AMERICAN IRISH. By ANDREW M. GREELEY. *Quadrangle. 320 pp. $8.95.*

Reviewed by ROBERT W. GREENE

Over the past several years evidence has been mounting to indicate that a reemergent white ethnic consciousness is upon us. This social phenomenon, which is usually referred to as the "new ethnicity" or the "new pluralism" by its sympathizers and as the "new tribalism" by its critics, has given rise to a number of books and newspaper and magazine articles. Andrew M. Greeley, director of the Center for the Study of American Pluralism, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, and an early supporter of the new ethnicity, is one of its pioneering interpreters. His publications in this area include, besides numerous articles and reviews, *Why Can't They Be Like Us?* (1971), a stimulating study of America's white ethnic groups. Greeley has characterized his new work as "the first attempt to write about the Irish experience in the United States from a sociological point of view." This claim is no doubt correct, but it should be remembered that within the last decade another comprehensive study of the Irish in America has appeared, William V. Shannon's monumental, historically-oriented *The American Irish*. There is also the superb seventy-page chapter on the New York Irish in Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan's now classic study of New York City's five major ethnic groups, *Beyond the Melting Pot*.

Put in its simplest historical and ideological terms, the new ethnicity is the spread in recent times of positive group self-consciousness from blacks to other minorities in America, including white minorities. With regard to the Irish, Pete Hamill, in the special "Irish" issue of *New York* magazine of March 13, 1972, contends that "something exhilarating and wild has happened to the Irish this past year, the reforging of a lost cultural identity." Andrew Greeley, on the other hand, asserts unequivocally at one point in *That Most Distressful Nation* that "the legitimation of ethnicity came too late for the American Irish." No doubt the truth about the American Irish with respect to their present attitude toward themselves as a group lies somewhere between these two divergent views.

Greeley's book tells us, directly and indirectly, wittingly and unwittingly, a good deal about the current state of the American Irish. His method over some seventeen chapters is a combination of history (of Ireland), anthropology (again focusing on Ireland), opinion research (comparing the American Irish with various other groups in America), and impressionistic essays (on certain aspects of the Irish-American character and personality). In itself this format, aside from the surprising absence of a section on Irish-American history, seems generally appropriate to the subject, and Greeley, a sociologist long interested in ethnicity, a third-generation Irish American, and a Roman Catholic priest, is ideally qualified to do the job that such a flexible, open-ended format calls for. Moreover, readers familiar with some of his earlier work have the right, I suppose, to expect something special from him on the American Irish. Unfortunately, his book on the subject is, on balance, a disappointment, though an informative and thought-provoking one.

Somewhat simplified, the main, partly interlocking themes of Greeley's book are the following: the persistence of certain Old-Country values and traits among the New-World Irish; the examination, through the study of history and anthropology as well as through personal observation, of certain culturally acquired behavioral patterns and attitudes in the American Irish; the proposition that the American Irish are in economic terms largely successful; the corollary (for Greeley) that with success the American Irish have been "tamed," have become dull, predictable, and uncreative. Among Greeley's secondary themes let us note at least these: the increasing invisibility of the American Irish to themselves and the larger society; their liberal politics in contrast to their conservative image; their paradoxical character and personality; their low self-esteem; their problems with alcohol; their capacity to survive.

GREELEY's summary of Irish history is detailed and pertinent. He identifies the four aspects of that history that would appear to have had the greatest shaping influence on the character of the American Irish: the Gaelic past, the Catholic religion, the Penal Laws, and the Great Famine. Reading Greeley's straightforward account of the last two, one can only shudder and agree with normally arch and imperturbable Daniel P. Moynihan when he says in his Foreword to the book:

> The damage done to the Irish by defeat is as nothing to that inflicted on the British through victory. The plain barbarity of British acts in Northern Ireland in 1971 and now in 1972 is scarcely imaginable save as one considers what they have done to themselves since Cromwell. In all else generous and brave: in this thing, hideous.

Hideous. An apt word to describe England's treatment of Ireland since the Reformation and before. For the American Irish especially, this great and long trauma is past; but the scar is deep and wide and its name is radical self-hatred. We know better today, perhaps, than we once did what price millennial contempt exacts from its recipient-victims, as well as what its cost can be to its author-victims. Probably every nation has its moral blind-spot, its quasi-official "dilemma." Ireland has been England's, and Greeley is right, in my opinion, to stress the burden of this baleful past on the American Irish of today.

As I have already implied, Greeley's book rests upon the presumption of a very high, if not all-determining, degree of continuity between the Old Country and the New. The Irish on both sides of the Atlantic, Greeley maintains, share such things as an intense loyalty to

ROBERT W. GREENE, *a new contributor, is associate professor of French at the University of Iowa.*

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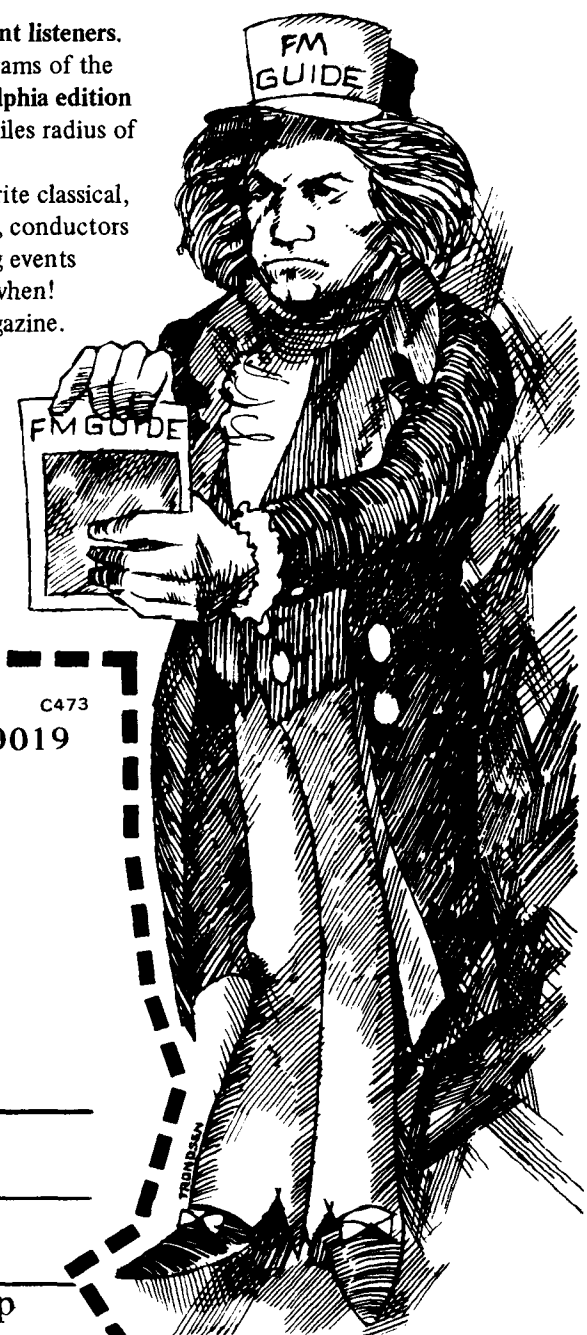

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the Catholic Church, strong sibling bonds, sociability, and a predilection for politics, coupled with an informal, indirect, pragmatic political style, that is rooted in the customary law and extended family structure of Celtic Ireland. While as a general principle the notion of continuity seems valid enough, for someone like myself who was born and raised in Irish America, is of Irish-born parents, and has visited close relatives in Ireland, the discontinuities and transformations that occur between the Irish of Ireland and those of America are on occasion as impressive as the continuities. I cannot imagine, for example, heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan's ever coming out of Ireland. Only Irish America (or, with different "styles" each, Italo-America, Polish America, etc.) could have produced him. As she has demonstrated over and over again, America can make an essentially pastoral people as hard as nails and, at the same time, insatiably hungry for recognition. Yet Sullivan's "style" outside the ring, his particular brand of charm and gregariousness, was thoroughly Irish, as William V. Shannon has shown. Thus, what is involved here is, in the end, not a complete cultural break but rather a complex transformation. It seems to me that in a book about the American Irish it is as important to speculate concretely and at length about possible breaks and transformations that would distinguish the New-World Irish from their Old-Country cousins as it is to enumerate continuities that would draw them together.

That said, I hasten to point out that Greeley is especially perceptive, in my opinion, when he generalizes about the genus Irish-American on the basis of his experiences with the predominantly Irish parishioners of Christ the King Church in Beverly, an upper-middle-class section of Chicago. (Greeley served as a curate in this parish for ten years, from the early 50's to the early 60's, and apparently still keeps in touch with its people.) His comments about familial and other interpersonal relations among the American Irish —for example, regarding parents who withhold praise from their children with crippling effect, the spiritually inhibiting and socially controlling function of ridicule, the subtle but dominating power of the Irish matriarch—strike me not only as accurate but also as tremendously important steps toward transmuting personal insights into common, "objective" knowledge. And the dissemination of just such knowledge is what is needed to liberate the Irish in America, not from oppression but from ignorance about themselves.

If there is one theme that dominates Greeley's book, it is the basically twofold notion that the American Irish, in their obsessive quest for respectability, for economic success and social acceptance, have been "tamed" by the very attainment of that goal. In short, they lost their "Soul," as Greeley puts it, when they gained suburbia. The theme is of course a cliché, and like most clichés it rings true up to a point. As re-

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gards the success factor alone, my own impressions, supported to some extent by information gleaned from sources such as Vance Packard's *A Nation of Strangers*, make me question Greeley's rather sunny appraisal of the overall socioeconomic achievement of the American Irish. Packard points out that of Chicago's fifteen wealthiest suburbs, only number fifteen in rank is predominantly Roman Catholic in religion (presumably German and Irish). Are most American Irish upper-middle class and living in places like Chicago's Beverly, as Greeley implies? Or are most of them still to be found in neighborhoods like Daley's classically white ethnic, lower-middle-class Bridgeport? My sense of the situation is that there are even now at least as many people in the Bridgeports of Irish America as in the Beverlys.

And have the Irish who inhabit America's Beverlys necessarily lost their Soul? Greeley is not very explicit about what he means by Irish Soul, though it must be conceded that he is skating on the outer rim of expressibility when he tries to put such a concept into words. One gathers, nonetheless, that for him it connotes tribal passion, mystical whimsy, spontaneous concern for others, generosity of spirit, and a kind of existential energy and imagination. If the American Irish ever had all these qualities, they no doubt did lose some of them in the struggle to get to suburbia. On the theoretical plane, however, are "success" and "Soul" mutually exclusive, as Greeley's central theme suggests? For that matter, are lack of success and lack of Soul mutually exclusive? In creating his rather simplistic Soul/-success polarity, it is as if Greeley merely radicalized and rigidified Macaulay's quip about the Irish as having qualities that make men interesting rather than successful.

For Greeley, success and Soul conflict, and because of this conflict, he has virtually painted himself into a corner. On the one hand, he wants very much for the American Irish to be successful, but on the other, he is in effect warning them that the price is too high. Greeley's attitude toward success is thus hopelessly ambivalent. In this he typifies most of his fellow Irishmen. This ambivalence, never directly confronted by Greeley, holds the key, in my opinion, to an understanding of a major facet of the American-Irish character and personality.

At the end of his long study of the American Irish, William Shannon reaches this conclusion: "If there is a single concept that distinguishes the Irish in America, it is their dual preoccupation with security and power." According to Shannon, the Irish in general have fared best in careers made within large organizations and institutions, work situations which allow them to satisfy their need for security now and power later, hopefully, within the organization. Complicating the matter, as Shannon further observes, is a kind of "aristocratic disdain for mere money-making" on the part of the Irish, and not least among those who have made some. While evidence exists to suggest that the Irish do view themselves as destined for a higher calling than worldly success (e.g., their significant overrepresentation in the convents and seminaries of America, as well as in the Peace Corps, as Greeley points out), it seems to me that this attitude can for some at least be simply a convenient pose, an after-the-fact rationalization for the refusal to bestir oneself and take risks in the secular sphere.

Risk-taking in the occupational realm, gambling with their twin needs of present security and future power for the sake of an only *possible* great success, financial or other, is not something the Irish have done frequently or well. Thus, to the extent that risk-taking is a precondition for outstanding success, the Irish on the whole are precluded by something in themselves from ever attaining that kind of success. In what is to my mind his most suggestive chapter outside of those devoted primarily to Ireland, Greeley in "The Next Generation" explores the Irishman's lack of "spiritual entrepreneurship," even if he neither calls it that nor probes this lack as deeply as he could have. He notes that those members of the younger generation of the American Irish with whom he has contact seem no dif-

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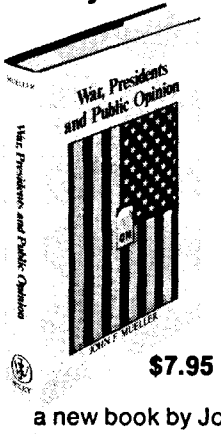

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ferent from their parents in their unwillingness to take risks. Greeley then speculates about possible reasons for their timidity. The capacity to take risks, he reminds us, presupposes a healthy amount of self-confidence, which, in turn, is usually born and nurtured in unambiguous parental approval during childhood. Sad to say, this type of reinforcement does not occur often enough in Irish-American homes. While there may be, and most likely usually is, plenty of love from parent to child, rarely will this love be matched by expressions of approval. Greeley illustrates this trait with an autobiographical statement that will no doubt shock some of his readers, though probably not the Irish ones among them: "In my own life I cannot recall ever being praised by my parents for any achievement."

But why should parents behave this way? Why don't they encourage their children by praising their accomplishments? What lies behind this withholding? Greeley raises such questions in "The Next Generation" and offers some tentative, partial answers to them. But midway through the chapter, he abruptly veers off in another, almost opposite, direction and tries to show, with the aid of opinion research, that the younger generation of American Irish "are not doing that badly" and in fact are doing rather well. Toward the end of the chapter Greeley attempts a synthesis of his own negative impressions regarding the extreme fragility of the young Irish-American's ego and the more positive data concerning achievement and attitude gathered through NORC surveys. However, the chapter's contradictory, almost schizoid, character persists through this synthesis, and we are left asking ourselves Greeley's own question: "But why is the socialization process of the Irish family so destructive to the confidence, self-esteem, and creativity of its young people?"

Greeley gets closest to answering this question himself when he observes on the same page that "in the Penal years, any Irishman who had spectacular success would have achieved it by selling out to the English conquerors at the expense of his fellows." The Penal Laws, as Greeley makes abundantly clear earlier in his study, begun in Elizabethan times, strengthened during Cromwell's reign, developed to their evil fullest after the Battle of Boyne in 1691, and in force until the *first* Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 (the *last* disabilities against Irish Catholic land ownership were not struck down until the Wyndham Act of 1903!), made it virtually illegal to be Catholic in Ireland, impossible to keep the traditional faith and at the same time enjoy the most elementary rights of a citizen and human being. As laws, they were framed in such a way as to encourage if not coerce conversion to Protestantism. I quote a passage selected at random from Greeley's summary of their incredible particulars:

> Catholics were excluded from the legal profession; they could be neither barristers, nor solicitors, nor magistrates, nor judges. They could not be members of municipal corporations. They could not serve in the army or the navy; they could not bear arms; they could not wear swords on ceremonial occasions. They could not own a horse worth more than five pounds; any Protestant seeing a Catholic with a more valuable horse could compel him to sell it for five pounds. Catholics might not acquire land from Protestants; a Catholic landowner could not deed his estate as a whole; no Catholic could hold a lease for more than thirty years, but a Catholic who became a Protestant could inherit his father's whole estate.

Thus, when Greeley invokes the Penal times within the context of such questions as risk-taking and success, and in the process associates "spectacular success" with "selling out," knowingly or not he is but a step away from deducing a general principle, from equating exceptional achievement with the denial of one's own, gaining distinction with losing the faith, success with despicable betrayal. Greeley himself never takes that step or makes that equation, but some of his readers no doubt will.

It seems to me that at the deepest level of the Irish psyche dwells the

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conviction that all individual risk-taking in the name of worldly pursuits involves the possibility not of greater achievement and fuller self-realization, but rather of ceasing to be Catholic, the ultimate betrayal. This conviction, though unexpressed and very likely completely unconscious, is nonetheless so widely held among the Irish that an elaborate set of moral constraints has been developed over the centuries for the mutual enforcement of the commandment-promise: stay with the crowd and you will keep the faith. Thus, the herding function of ridicule, excessive teasing, "Who do you think you are?," "What will people say?," parents denying praise to their children—all discussed by Greeley, but *not* as techniques for binding the Irish together in the faith and protecting them, in any way possible, from success, that most mortal of sins.

In his chapter on the Church, Greeley quotes the historian Patrick J. Corish: "The Cromwellian settlement made the 'Irish' and 'Catholic' synonymous: to be the one was automatically to be the other." Thus did the faith come to be inextricably bound up with the notion of self as Irish and other as English-Protestant, and one's most basic integrity, in the manner of Thomas More, to be concentrated in adamantine allegiance to the Roman Church. While he never quite says so, at several points in his book Greeley hints at his own belief in the enduring synonymy of "Irish" and "Catholic," as well as at the fact that for him the vital core of the Irish heritage in America is religious faith. But have we not reached that point in our own history and that of the British Isles when "Irish" and "Catholic" are no longer as synonymous as they once were, and when in fact "Irish Catholic" leans more toward Irish than toward Catholic, rather than the reverse, which used to be the case? Surely if there is one thing we have learned from the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland during the past three and a half years, with "Catholics" (native Irish) on one side and "Protestants" (descendants in their vast majority of the Scottish and English plantation-solution settlers) on the other, it is that to be Irish Catholic is not

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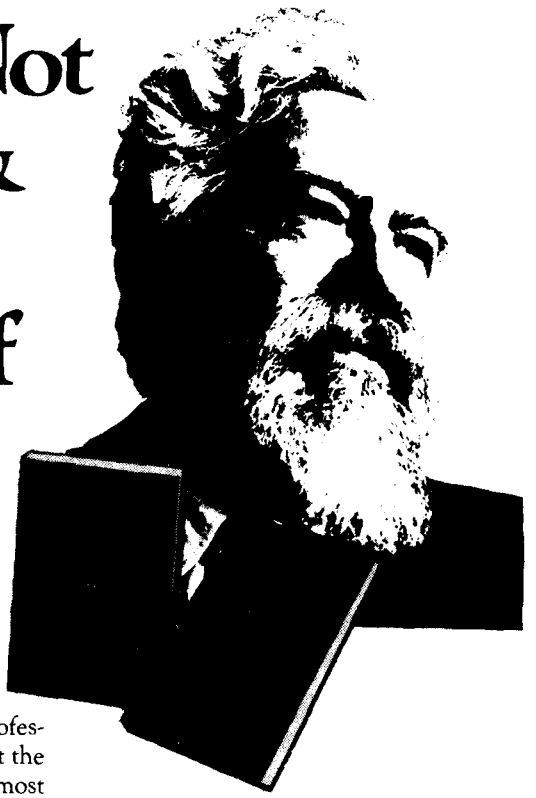

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necessarily to be a believer. Is not a comparable separation of religion and ethnicity beginning to manifest itself in America? Is that not in fact an aspect of the new ethnicity? Does not one still feel bonds of kinship and solidarity with one's fellow Irishmen in America when one no longer shares the traditional faith? I pose these questions because they are "in the air" nowadays and because, to my mind at least, their implication is clear: leaving the faith no longer automatically means deserting the faithful, nor can success any longer be equated, subliminally or otherwise, with the betrayal of one's kind. I cannot help but wonder whether Greeley might have held back from pushing his exploration of the "success problem" of the American Irish further than he did out of an unconscious fear of having eventually to deal with such questions.

IN THE final analysis, however, Greeley's hesitations and ambivalences tell us more, perhaps, about the present state of the American Irish than the most lucid, critically self-aware account of the subject ever could. The American Irish today are a troubled, confused lot, as a group and as individuals, and they are troubled in ways that go beyond the "normal" anxieties and insecurities they feel as white ethnics. Greeley's conclusion about the more than geographic marginality of Ireland in relation to the rest of Europe ("Ireland is Europe, all right, but either not quite or just barely"), when slightly modified, describes perfectly the borderline position the American Irish occupy in relation to both the majority culture and white ethnics: they are not quite nativist and are just barely ethnic.

Michael Novak, in his brilliant if at times abrasive *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics,** has recently reminded the American Irish of just how vulnerable they are, as well as how uncomfortable they can be made to feel, on their ethnic flank. Novak's book shows, among other things, that "ethnic animosity within the Catholic Church" has increasingly isolated the Irish from the other Catholic groups in America, people who have been patronized and bullied by the Irish for a century and who are now beginning to give tongue to their resentment. On their other flank, while the American Irish are closer culturally to Anglo-Saxon America than other white ethnics, one should not for an instant forget the immensely important fact that the Irish alone, of all white ethnics, have lived for centuries, and on the receiving end, in a stark and brutal adversary relationship with overwhelming Anglo-Saxon power. This may mean that at a visceral, pre-conscious level, the American Irish experience our ethnic-nativist conflict, muted though it has become, in a more devastating way, emotionally and psychologically, than other white minority groups in the country experience the same conflict.

This brings me to my last source of disappointment with *That Most Distressful Nation*. In part no doubt because he feels he has already treated the broader topic of white ethnicity in *Why Can't They Be Like Us?*, and doubtless because in the present book he wishes to stress the American Irishman's unique heritage and his continuity with his Irish past, Greeley does not attempt to situate the American Irishman with respect to the recent reassertion of a white ethnic consciousness in our land. He gives the American Irishman an Irish past that is both harrowing and heroic, but little in the way of an American history, only a vague and vaguely desperate present, and not much hope for the future. But surely the new ethnicity represents the essential fact of our present, our means of retrieving the past, immediate as well as remote, and our promise of a better future. While it is obviously no panacea, it has as much potential for helping the Irish to find their place in America as it does for helping other groups.

Thanks to the new ethnicity, the American Irish, and *all* other groups in America, have the chance to awaken from the nightmare of history (to paraphrase Joyce), from the time-honored but dignity-destroying dream of a melting-pot America. Paradoxically, we can probably awaken from this bad dream best through the study of history and not through any deliberate effort to revive or time-freeze fading or evolving group self-concepts. It would be impossible to improve upon Moynihan's neat formulation of this option and need in his Foreword:

> There is no need for the recreation of a distinctive ethnic identity. *It is enough to hope that the Irish experience, as that of others, may become part of the American sensibility.* It is something we need to know about ourselves, something we need to teach, and which we must first learn (emphasis in original).

For it is only after setting the record of our various, interconnected pasts straight that we shall be in a position to shape our collective future with intelligence and mutual respect.

* Reviewed by Robert Alter in COMMENTARY, June 1972.

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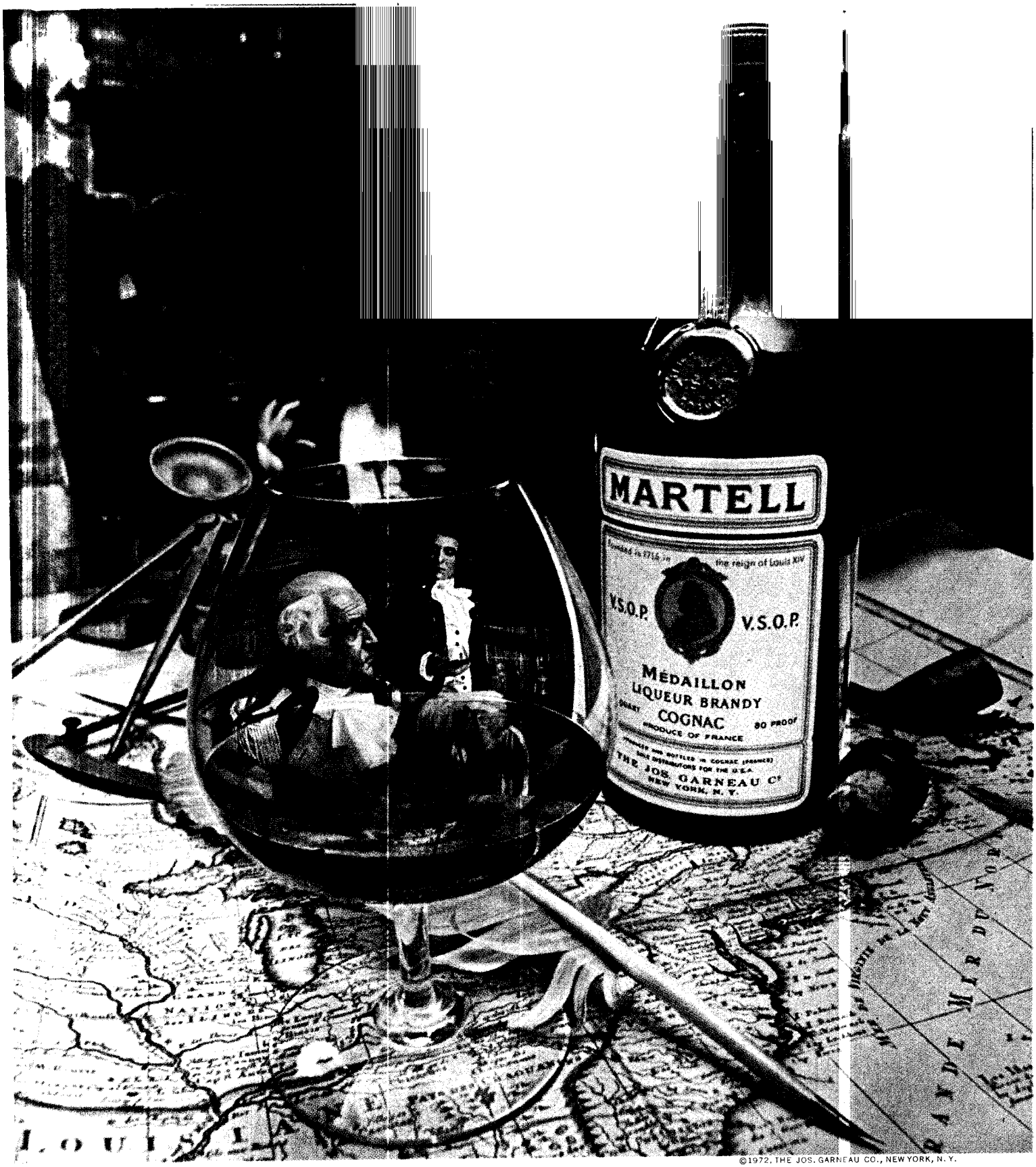

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